The Use and Consequences of Group-Based Appeals

Mads Thau

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PhD Dissertation

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Preface

This summary report is part of the PhD dissertation *The Use and Consequences of Group-Based Appeals* carried out at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University. The report gives an overview of the dissertation by presenting the argument, the main results and the contributions, but it also introduces additional evidence that goes beyond the articles. In addition to this report, the dissertation includes three self-contained articles:

A. Thau M (2017) How Political Parties Use Groups-Based Appeals: Evidence from Britain 1964-2015. *Political Studies*. Online View.

B. Thau M (2018) The Electoral Consequences of Group-Based Appeals in Britain. *Unpublished manuscript.*

C. Thau M (2018) Political Parties, Group-Based Appeals and the Social Divisions of Electoral Politics. *Unpublished manuscript.*

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Chapter 1:
Introduction

A mainstay of representative democracies is that political parties compete over the support of the people. They do so in many ways, trying to mobilize the base, convince the undecided or steal opposition support. In one word, they *appeal* to voters. Understanding the use and consequences of electoral appeals is a key issue to political scientists, party elites, and commentators alike. We typically address it from the voter angle: given the goal of increasing voter support, we naturally assume that electoral appeals fit how voters actually make up their minds (Adams 2012; Green-Pedersen 2007; Hillygus and Shields 2008).

In this dissertation, I advance a new theory about party electoral strategies, building on the idea that voters are *group-oriented*. This has been overlooked in the literature on how parties appeal for votes, but the idea is not far-fetched. A long line of research has shown that vote choice is based on group sentiments, collective identities, and social categorization (e.g., Achen and Bartels 2016, Butler and Stokes 1969; Campbell et al. 1960; Heath 2015; Kam and Kinder 2012; Lazarsfeld et al. 1948; Tilley 2015). Voters pick and choose among party options for many reasons, but one is which groups the parties are thought to represent (Achen and Bartels 2016; Converse 1964; Miller et al. 1991). This means that vote-seeking parties care about *group images*, that is, the public perceptions of group-party ties, as the right image may shape how people see a party and determine its electoral success (Janda et al. 1995). I theorize that parties adjust group images in strategic ways using *group-based appeals*, that is, statements that associate or dissociate a party with an explicit group category. While there may be other ways to target group-party ties, a well-established voter sensitivity to social cues makes group-based appeals unusually effective (Carnes and Sadin 2015; Jackson 2011; Kinder and Kam 2009; Nelson and Kinder 1996).

The idea that groups matter is hardly new. Research on party systems, party politics, and party competition routinely stresses the importance of social groups (e.g., Bawn et al. 2012; Kriesi et al. 2008; Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Robertson 1976; Somer-Topcu 2015; Tavits 2005). Political parties emerged from group cleavages, now represent group interests, and continuously vie for group support. In many ways, "social groups are the essence of competition in politics" (Robertson 1976: 11). Yet, social groups are curiously absent from theories of how parties appeal for votes. It is not as if group-based appeals are

hard to find. In recent elections in the United States, France and Britain, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton praised the efforts of "mothers" (Clinton 2016), Front National's Marine Le Pen defended the impoverished "working classes" (Le Pen 2017), and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn expressed his concern for indebted "young people" (Corbyn 2017).

So, if not group-based appeals, what has previous work on party electoral strategy focused on? The answer appears clear: by now, a substantial literature assumes that vote choice is *policy-motivated* and argues that parties use *policy-based appeals* to adjust *policy images* so they fit what voters want (e.g., Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Bawn and Somer-Topcu 2012; Dolezal et al. 2014; Downs 1957; Ezrow 2005; Iversen 1994; Kitschelt 1994; Kriesi et al. 2008; Meguid 2008; Pardos-Prado and Dinas 2010; Tavits 2007). Parties offer policies to generate support; voters support parties based on the positions they are thought to occupy (Kitschelt 2011: 620). The argument of this dissertation is not that this view is wrong but, rather, that policy is not all there is to party electoral strategy. Since voters evaluate both which policies and which groups different parties represent, vote-seeking parties care about both their policy and group image and use both policy-based and group-based appeals (Dickson and Scheve 2006).

This group theory of party electoral strategy is empirically substantiated using novel data on group-based appeals in Britain from 1964 to 2015. I adopt a long-term perspective for two reasons. First, it allows me to test if group-based appeals play a role in relation to one of the most significant changes to politics in advanced industrial democracies: the transition from class to catch-all politics (Dalton 2014). If group-based appeals are central in the party strategic repertoire, it seems only reasonable to expect that they mattered in this important process. Second, the long-term perspective allows me confront the idea that "parties increasingly forgo appeals to social groups" (Stoll 2010) in the face of dealignment trends – an idea that may well explain why the literature has not already studied group-based appeals.

In the empirical analysis, I find that group-based appeals are as important as ever: the use of group-based appeals has increased over the 50 years studied, they are used in accordance with electoral market incentives, and they are not proxies for policy positions or issue emphasis. Further, I find that group-based appeals played a key role in catch-all strategies and declining class voting, independently of the policy-based appeals that we already know mattered. In the British case, group-based appeals helped Labour expand its catchment area and increase support – especially outside the decreasing working class base. However, they also undermined stereotypical images of class representation in this process, leading to substantial change in the class basis of electoral choice in Britain. Previous work is not wrong that policy-based appeals

are important, but this dissertation shows that group-based appeals matter to party strategy, electoral success, and vote choice on their own.

The dissertation asks the following overall research question: *How are group-based appeals used, and what are their electoral consequences?* The answers provided in this report and the three self-contained articles hold major implications for our understanding of party electoral strategy and raise a number of questions that deserve scholarly attention. The remainder of the summary report is organized as follows: Chapter 2 develops the theory and derives some observable implications that are testable in a long-term perspective. Chapter 3 discusses the British case and the new content analysis before giving an overview of the focus, data sources and analytical strategy in Articles A, B, and C (and the empirical chapters). Chapter 4 analyzes the use of group-based appeals, while the electoral consequences are analyzed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 takes up two shortcomings of the main empirical analysis and brings in additional evidence from separate or ongoing work to accommodate them. Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the implications of the findings and concludes with suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2:
The argument

Political parties often appeal to groups. Presumably, they do so in the hopes of winning votes, and political behavioral research suggests they could. This chapter explains why parties use group-based appeals, defines what they are and clarifies how group-based appeals differ from the policy-based appeals that previous work has focused on. The chapter ends by deriving a set of observable implications about how parties use group-based appeals and what the electoral consequences should be.

2.1. The group basis of politics

Political parties appeal to voters in many ways, and different theories point to different aspects of the party strategic repertoire. *Spatial models* focus on policy promises (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Downs 1957), the *issue competition perspective* points to the issue agenda; (Budge and Farlie 1983; Green-Pedersen 2007), and *partisan theory* highlights policy outputs, macroeconomic spending in particular (Beramendi et al. 2015; Hibbs 1977). Yet, common to this and other work dealing with party strategy is a core assumption that party behavior is informed by voting behavior: party theories build on voter assumptions. I do not question if voters care about party positions, the political agenda or policy outputs. The voter assumptions underlying previous work seem sound enough. I do, however, point to an aspect of voter decision-making that scholars have either overlooked or treated inadequately: group orientations.

Voters are known to think in terms of groups when it comes to politics. Since Lazarsfeld et al. (1948: 27) wrote that "a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially", studies in comparative politics, electoral research, and political psychology have shown that group orientations are key ingredients in the voter decision-making process (e.g., Achen and Bartels, 2016; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Butler and Stokes 1969; Campbell et al. 1960; Conover, 1988; Cramer 2016; Gurin, Miller and Gurin 1980; Heath 2015; Kinder and Kam 2009; Sniderman et al. 2004; Wlezien and Miller 1997). On the input side, people organize the political landscape according to social categories to make better sense of it. On the output side, people's group orientations help guide political behavior. Politics may feel distant or be difficult, but once it is decoded in social group terms it becomes more intuitive and gains substance. As Miller and Wlezien (1993:18) argue, "social groups provide important cues

that influence both how citizens think about politics and the electoral choices they make". This use of group-centric heuristics is not just for the uninformed; it is "an inescapable fact of life [that] will occur no matter how educated we are, how much information we have, and how much thinking we do" (Popkin 1994: 218). Voters are, as Achen and Bartels (2016: 215) say, "naturally group-oriented".

One way of showing just how group orientations matter is to borrow the simple but illustrative model of class politics proposed by Butler and Stokes (1969: 85-87). In this two-level model, an individual is first linked to a particular class, and that class is then linked to a particular party. In other words, the model has a group level and a party level, and basically says that all people need to know when they vote is which class they belong to and which party best represents this class. For our purposes, we can expand this in two ways. One way is to apply the model not just to class but to groups in general. No doubt, social class has been important to voting in many countries, but class is just one example of group-based voting (e.g., Achen and Bartels 2016; Campbell et al. 1960). Another way is to accept that it is unnecessarily restricting to focus on group membership and identification. These are often good predictors of how individuals feel about groups, but people may be positively or negatively oriented towards groups for other reasons. For example, the idea about group membership and identification cannot explain why people like groups they do not belong to. In the end, it is people's group orientations that matter (e.g., Kinder and Kam 2009; Miller and Wlezien 1993).[1] As with the Butler-Stokes model, in this broader *group voting model* people only need to ask themselves two questions when choosing among the party options: Which social groups come to mind as I think about the different parties? And how do I feel about these groups? (Achen and Bartels 2016: 301; Green et al. 2002: 8; Miller et al. 1991: 1147). Simply put, group orientations matter because they help make vote choices simple and relevant.

2.2. Group and policy images

This has obvious implications for party behavior. If voting is group-oriented, we should expect vote-seeking parties to play into this. Party elites can hardly expect to shape the group orientations that people possess, as these are largely formed outside the political domain (Huddy 2013; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Group-party ties, on the other hand, involve the parties themselves and are therefore also sensitive to what those parties say and do. This point was made

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[1] In political and social psychological terminology, I thus prefer a group reference model over a social identity model (e.g., Fiske and Taylor 2013).

long ago by Converse (1964) and has been substantiated in many empirical studies since (Jackson 2011; Kinder and Kam 2012; Klar 2013; Nelson and Kinder 1996; Miller and Wlezien 1993). I argue that party electoral strategies are built around this. The public perceptions of group-party ties, or *group images* as I call them, are key assets to vote-seeking parties: tapping into "deep-seated habits of thinking" (Kam and Kinder 2012: 337), group images allow parties to take advantage of "natural" (Achen and Bartels 2016: 215) determinants of vote choice in a way that is persuasive and "user-friendly" (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000: 7).

Of course, group images are not the sole focus of party electoral strategies. A long line of research has stressed the importance of *policy images*, that is, the public view on party policy positions (e.g., Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Bawn and Somer-Topcu 2012; Downs 1957; Iversen 1994; Kitschelt 1994; Meguid 2008; Tavits 2007). This perspective builds on a *policy voting model* in which party choice is based on individual policy preferences. Here, the voting calculus also boils down to two simple questions: What policies do the different parties stand for? And which party's positions are closer to mine? (Abramowitch and Saunders 2006: 186). Scholars assume that people's policy preferences are beyond the reach of party elites (Adams et al. 2012; Evans and De Graaf 2013) but argue that parties change policy images to match policy demands and increase vote shares.

I agree that policy images are important. But I argue that previous work has been wrong to focus on policy as the only "currency" in the electoral market place (Kitschelt 2011: 620). We know that voters distinguish between political parties based on which social groups they represent (Achen and Bartels 2016; Butler and Stokes 1969; Converse 1964; Nicholson and Segura 2012; Zinni et al. 1997). If asked, people know which party best represents the working class, racial minorities, or religious groups. In fact, along with policy positions, such group ties are among the primary reasons voters give when asked to explain party choices (Campbell et al. 1960; see Dalton 2014: 31). Vote-seeking parties act on this. As they aim to "shape their images so that the public sees what the parties want" (Janda et al. 1995: 172), they change or sustain policy images but also group images.

2.3. Group-based and policy-based appeals

Group images are important to party electoral strategy but how are they changed or sustained? I argue that parties use *group-based appeals*. As a concept, I consider group-based appeals to be one example of electoral appeals more broadly. And like any electoral appeal, the main purpose is to increase

the chance that voters at the receiving end will prefer the party at the sponsoring end. I define group-based appeals as explicit statements that link some political party to some category of people. More specifically, they involve a party associating or dissociating itself (or another party) with a particular group category like workers, young people or women.

This definition builds upon recent work on how policy images are changed or sustained. As Dolezal et al. (2014: 64) argue, political parties take up given positions using *policy-based appeals*, which involve a party stating that it (or another party) is for or against a particular policy like tax cuts, environmental regulation or immigration reform (see also Kriesi et al. 2008). The difference between group-based and policy-based appeals thus lies in whether they concern groups or policies. Both provide what Converse (1964: 236) described as "linking information" telling voters why a given party is relevant to them, but in one, parties offer voters a policy-based reason to pick them, while in the other, they offer a group-based reason. This may seem like a marginal difference, but studies consistently show how group cues about class, race and gender, for example, shape vote choices, public opinion and candidate perceptions in powerful ways (Brader et al. 2008; Carnes and Sadin 2015, Jackson 2011; Holman et al. 2016; Kinder and Kam 2009; Nelson and Kinder 1996).

Group-based appeals come in many shapes and sizes within the definition I apply. Take one example from the Labour Party in Britain: "We seek to bring about a fundamental change in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families". In this statement, it is clear that Labour associates itself with working people. Yet political parties may also dissociate themselves from certain groups as seen, for example, with radical right-wing populist parties and immigrants, or with socialist parties and the rich. Also, the sponsoring party need not talk about itself but can talk about other parties, most often rivals, as illustrated in this example from the British Conservative Party: "The welfare of the old, the sick, the handicapped and the deprived has also suffered under Labour". Finally, group-based appeals may associate a rival party and a group, as illustrated when leftist parties say that rightist parties represent up-scale groups. Yet, however group-based appeals look, the goal is always the same: to increase the chance that receiving voters will support the sponsoring party over the alternatives. In the end, parties use group-based appeals in the hopes of winning votes.

2.4. The long-term observable implications

Most previous work has argued that since voters evaluate party positions, election-oriented parties attend to policy images using policy-based appeals. I argue that since voters evaluate group ties as well, parties also attend to group

images using group-based appeals. How can we substantiate this group theory of party electoral strategy? I derive and test two sets of observable implications about the use and consequences of group-based appeals.

The first set concerns how group-based appeals are used. If group-based appeals are really at the core of party electoral strategies, they should also be used in accordance with electoral incentives. If a party has *reason* to stress ties to a particular group, then it should do so. There are many ways of testing this idea. This dissertation adopts a long-term perspective, covering a period from 1964 to 2015. It does so to challenge the most likely explanation why previous work has not already studied group-based appeals, namely that some may believe that politics has lost its group basis. Based on comparative electoral research showing declining levels of class and religious voting since the 1960s (e.g., Franklin et al. 1992; Inglehart 1997; Thomassen 2005), it is tempting to infer that election-oriented parties "increasingly forgo appeals to social groups" (Stoll 2010: 452). Why would parties talk about groups if voting is no longer group-based?

This inference is flawed, however. While *some* groups may have lost influence, this does not mean that voters are less dependent on group orientations *as such*. Specific group categories wax and wane in their relevance to vote choice, but the significance of groups is inherent to political thinking. This generally implies that the basic incentives to use group-based appeals are constant. But electoral politics has also changed, of course, and this should be reflected in how parties use group-based appeals. One change is the partisan dealignment caused by modernization processes and the weakening of formal organizations like unions or churches (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Klingemann and Fuchs 1995). For political parties, this means that support can no longer be taken for granted (Mair et al. 2004). More voters must be convinced to choose a given party, and supporting organizations are less able to mobilize voters. In this sense, electoral incentives did change, but they strengthened rather than weakened. Contrary to what some believe, I expect that parties responded by increasing the use of group-based appeals.

The electoral market has changed in other ways as well. A key development altering party incentives is increasing competition from alternative forms of interest aggregation. The rise of "new politics" (Franklin et al., 1992) has politicized a number of groups now seeking recognition, and social movements in particular are threatening the party monopoly on citizen representation (Mair 2013). Parties must meet this new demand to remain competitive and relevant. At the same time, this has not altered what Schattschneider (1975) called "the conflict of conflicts": attention remains a scarce resource in politics. Just as some policies are always emphasized over others, so should groups be "selectively emphasized" (Budge and Farlie 1983). On the one hand,

I thus expect that parties target an expanding range of group categories. On the other, I expect stability in how evenly (or unevenly) emphasis is distributed across that range of groups.[2]

Finally, we can also deduce some expectations as to which specific group categories are targeted. As comparative political research argues, the erosion of cleavage voting, the new politics agenda, partisan dealignment, and the compositional restructuring of electorates, should all lead parties to reorient themselves in terms of which voters they appeal to (Evans and Tilley 2017; Kitschelt 1994; Mair et al. 1994). As Best (2011: 282) puts it, traditional constituencies are simply no longer as "electorally relevant" to parties because they are smaller and more volatile. Parties are therefore forced to expand their catchment areas to avoid decreasing vote totals (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Precisely which groups are targeted, and which are ignored, should depend on the specific context – most notably, changes in relative group sizes and in the issue agenda.[3] Generally speaking, however, I expect parties to downplay ties to the declining group constituencies, and highlight ties to expanding or newly politicized groups. Overall then, we should observe that group-based appeals are used in ways that reflect the long-term changes in electoral market incentives.

The second set of observable implications concerns the electoral consequences of group-based appeals. If the group theory of party electoral strategy is to advance the literature, we should see clear and consistent effects of group-based appeals on voters. After all, that is why vote-seeking parties use them in the first place. Once again, there are various ways to approach this. In this dissertation, I exploit the long-term perspective to study the effects of group-based appeals in the context of perhaps the most striking change to electoral politics at all: the transition from class to catch-all politics.

In a comparative perspective, there is little doubt that politics used to be structured around social class (Dalton 2014; Korpi 1983; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). As Lipset (1981: 230) once put it, "on a world scale [...] parties are primarily based on either the lower classes or the middle and upper classes". But there is also little doubt that this changed during the second half of the twentieth century. At the macro level, parties pursued catch-all strategies aimed at expanding the traditional catchment areas (Green-Pedersen 2007; Kitschelt 1994; Mair et al. 2004). Increasingly, "socialist parties vied for the votes of the new middle class, and conservative parties sought votes from the working class" (Dalton 2014: 164). At the individual level, the class basis of electoral

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[2] See Article A and later chapters for more on this distinction between the range and concentration of group emphasis.

[3] Chapter 4 elaborates on this in the context of the British case, as does Article A.

choice waned as people started voting based on other considerations (Evans and De Graaf 2013; Knutsen 2006; Thomassen 2005). If group-based appeals are as central to party electoral strategy as I suggest, it seems only reasonable to expect that they played some role in this important process.

Group-based appeals should matter in two different ways. First, I expect that group-based appeals helped mainstream parties gain votes in the shift towards catch-all politics – especially outside traditional constituencies. The era of catch-all politics is most often understood in terms of policy. Studies suggest that parties, predominantly leftist ones, increased vote shares considerably by taking more centrist positions on left-right economic policies because this allowed them to satisfy a larger set of policy preferences in the electorate (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Karreth et al. 2012; Kitschelt 1994; Mair et al. 2004). Another way to increase vote totals would be to change the group image and downplay the particularistic social class ties that would otherwise prevent a broad voter appeal (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Policy-based appeals certainly mattered to catch-all strategies and party electoral success, but I expect that group-based appeals were effective on their own.

We can tease out a second hypothesis regarding the electoral consequences. If group-based appeals work to highlight or downplay parties' ties to certain groups, then the relevance of those same group categories to vote choice should also be influenced. In the case of declining class voting, a growing body of work suggests that this change was policy-driven (Elff 2009; Evans 2000; Evans and De Graaf 2013; Oskarson 2005). Pursuing catch-all strategies, leftist and rightist parties in advanced industrial democracies have become increasingly centrist and similar in terms of left-right economic policy over the past decades, meaning that voters in different classes cannot tell which party best matches their class-based policy interests (Evans and Tilley 2012: 964). Yet, although policy-based appeals do seem important, I expect that the class basis of electoral choice was also shaped by group-based appeals. As parties downplay group images of class representation, social class should lose salience as a predictor of vote choice. If group-based appeals truly resonate with voters, we should see that they can weaken or reinforce class differences in party support.

In sum, a group theory of party electoral strategy has observable implications for both the long-term use and consequences of group-based appeals. Below, I recap the hypotheses that will guide the empirical analysis:

H1   The use of group-based appeals should *not* decrease over the years – if anything, the frequency should be increasing.

H2   The range of categories targeted in group-based appeals should be widening, but the concentration of emphasis across this range should remain unchanged.

H3   Parties should downplay ties to traditional group constituencies and highlight ties to other groups.

H4   A catch-all strategy downplaying group images of class representation should help mainstream parties increase vote shares.

H5   Group-based appeals that reinforce stereotypical group images of class representation should strengthen class voting, while group-based appeals that cross-cut these images should weaken it.

Chapter 3:
Studying group-based appeals

In order to study the use and consequences of group-based appeals, I rely on data from a new content analysis of British election manifestos and combine this with other data on policy-based appeals, election results and individual party support. This chapter first discusses Britain as a test case. It then presents the content analysis of group-based appeals in some detail. Lastly, it gives a brief overview of the focus, data sources and analytical strategy of Articles A, B, C and the empirical chapters in this report. See articles and later chapters for pecifics on model specification and measurement.

3.1. The British case

I test the implications of the group theory of party electoral strategy using data from Britain. Why this country? The main benefit of the British case to this dissertation is its central place in previous work on catch-all strategies and group politics. We have seen a shift towards catch-all strategies at the party level and a decline in class voting at the voter level across many countries, but nowhere has this been more evident than in Britain (Dalton 2014; Evans et al. 1999; Evans and Tilley 2017; Green 2007; Karreth et al. 2012; Kitschelt 1994; Knutsen 2006; Mair et al. 2004). This makes Britain a particularly useful case. While unexplored cases help test the empirical scope of existing accounts, any alternative theory is best substantiated in a well-known case. Only then can we truly compare.

However, Britain also is good testing ground for more practical reasons. Compared to proportional multi-party systems, its majoritarian two-and-a-half party system makes the party competitive setting relatively simple, which in turn allows for a more a straightforward test of the argument. It is no coincidence that research on party electoral strategy has often taken its point of departure in the British case. For example, the saliency theory of party competition (Robertson 1976) and the most widely used data source on party behavior – the Manifesto Project Dataset (Budge et al. 2001; see Volkens et al. 2013) – both came from analyses of British election manifestos. Further, due to the intense scholarly attention to party strategies and voting behavior in Britain, extensive data on parties as well as voters is now available, which allows me to take advantage of four high-quality data sources: the British Election Study, the British Social Attitudes surveys, the Manifesto Project Dataset on Britain, and the Comparative Agendas Project on Britain.

Admittedly, it would have been ideal to cover more countries. But the focus on one country is really a matter of time and resources. A content analysis of over 50 years of party political texts requires enormous effort. The coding process alone took over nine months. Within that constraint, I prioritized time coverage over the inclusion of additional countries for shorter periods. The most likely reason group-based appeals have already not been studied is that such appeals are presumed ineffective because group politics has waned (e.g., Stoll 2010). A group theory of party electoral strategy must confront this. To tell a convincing story, I need data going back to the 1960s when the assumed changes to group politics began.

Case selection has implications, of course. What leverage does the British case provide? In important ways, the similarities between Britain and other advanced industrial democracies outweigh the differences. British voters like voters elsewhere are naturally group-oriented and British parties like parties elsewhere want to win votes. Also, although Britain has undergone significant changes since the 1960s, other advanced industrial democracies have undergone the same changes (Dalton 2014; Denver et al. 2012). To the extent that electoral change plays a role in the use and consequences of group-based appeals, it should do so in the same way across advanced industrial democracies. From this perspective then, we should expect findings to travel to other countries. Of course, the majoritarian two-and-a-half-party system also sets Britain apart from most other countries. In Chapter 6, I probe if the electoral system may limit the conclusions about group-based appeals by bringing in content-analytic data from Denmark – a proportional multiparty system – to go beyond the main empirical analysis.

3.2. A content analysis of group-based appeals

The main empirical analysis of this dissertation revolves around a new dataset consisting of 10,000 group-based appeals found in British election manifestos from 1964 to 2015. I use election manifestos as sources of party electoral strategy for three main reasons. First, they offer the time coverage necessary to test the observable implications of my argument. Second, since the manifestos result from an intra-party coordination and negotiation process, they can be said to represent political parties as unitary actors. As Cole (2005: 209) argues, this is a major advantage to any study with parties as the units of analysis (see also Budge 2001; Helbling and Tresch 2011). Other sources like political speeches, media appearances, or web-based material can be useful, but they rarely offer long-term coverage and may be difficult to attribute to the party in

general. A third reason to focus on election manifestos is that the data on policy-based appeals[4] used in previous work on party electoral strategy comes from those same election manifestos, meaning that the empirical analysis will speak directly to this work.

We have to recognize that most people do not actually read manifestos. This does not make them obsolete, however, because the main function of an election manifesto lies in coordinating all other aspects of the election campaign (Adams et al. 2011: 372; Budge 2001: 51). In this sense, manifesto data offers measures of what parties' electoral appeals look like more broadly at given points in time (Green-Pedersen 2011).

To collect the data on group-based appeals, I designed a manual content analysis aimed at measuring how much the parties emphasize positive or negative relations to a range of group categories. Specifically, each Labour and Conservative election manifesto during the 50-year period studied was hand coded using group-based appeals as the unit of analysis. I drew on the method that Dolezal et al. (2014) use to code policy-based appeals, which divides the unit of analysis into *subject*, *object*, and their *relation*.[5] For every group-based appeal recorded, the subject party, the object group, and the subject-object relation – that is, whether party and group were associated or dissociated – was coded. In practical terms, the coding took place between June 2015 and February 2016 and was done by myself and two hired coders who went through a two-week training program. Based on a detailed codebook, which can be found in the appendix, we read through the election manifestos sentence-by-sentence, identifying and coding on average seven group-based appeals on each page and around 10,000 in total.

In general, this coding procedure is similar to that of other established projects based on hand coding of political texts (Baumgartner et al. 2006; Kriesi et al. 2008; Volkens et al. 2013). But in one important respect, the procedure differed from previous work. Unlike policy or issue categories for which exhaustive lists are typically made before coding, such a list was not obvious for group categories, as no study has previously catalogued group-based appeals.[6] Although parties often target relatively well-defined groups such as

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[4] The main data sources used in the literature are the *Manifesto Project Dataset* (Volkens et al. 2013) and, to a lesser degree, the *Comparative Agendas Project* (Baumgartner et al. 2006). I describe both datasets below.

[5] See Kriesi et al. (2008) for another application of this method, which was developed by Kleinnijenhuis et al. (1997: see also Helbling and Tresch 2011).

[6] I note that we should not overstate this difference. The seminal studies underlying the Manifesto Project Dataset or the Comparative Agendas Project dataset also had an inductive approach in the development of the coding systems used today.

"poor people" or "women", they might also target groups that do not come to mind *a priori*. In fact, one major goal with the content analysis was to explore empirically which group categories parties actually target. Only two broad categories indicating whether the group was economic or non-economic were therefore coded at the outset. Otherwise, for every group-based appeal recorded, we stored the actual word(s) denoting the group reference in a text variable to enable subsequent analysis. In other words, the data-generating process consisted of two steps. The first was to identify and code appeals; the second was to build specific group categories inductively from the open-ended text entries.

For this second step, I initially relied on *automated text analysis* to reduce the volume of text. Following Grimmer and Stewart (2013: 272), I created a *bag-of-words* (see also Hopkins and King 2010: 232), that is, partitioned all open-ended information into unique, stemmed words and categorized the 10,000 observations according to these.[7] This regrouped all group-based appeals into around 550 word categories.[8] I then sorted word categories according to frequency and went through them manually to make sure that they were mutually exclusive and to validate them. In this process, I also collapsed categories that had the same basic meaning, for example, "the handicapped" and "disabled people", "the ill" and "those in need of care". Likewise, some categories were subsumed under a more abstract category if the N was small – as with "Asian people" and "coloured people", which were added to "ethnic minorities". The end result is a range of group categories grounded in what the two main British parties have actually said from 1964 to 2015.

Any content analysis based on hand coding is sensitive to subjectivity and misclassification, but there are many ways to overcome this (Krippendorff 2004). First, the design I use generally builds on other validated approaches as much as possible. Second, the coding was based on a detailed codebook, which was itself piloted multiple times according to a trial-and-error procedure to find the right balance between detail and precision. Third, the two hired coders were trained in the coding procedure based on this codebook. And fourth, actual coding was done using a digital platform that eliminated many common errors like typos, blanks or double entries. Even so, the reliability of the content analysis needs to be assessed. I tested inter-coder reliability in the unitizing as well as the coding of group-based appeals (Riffe et al.

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[7] The *txttool* package available for Stata can be used to do this.

[8] For practical reasons, I excluded words that appeared less than five times in the entire text corpus under the assumption that these are politically inconsequential. Note that the excluded appeals are not dropped from the dataset but are grouped under the residual category "others".

2005). In one test assessing the unitizing procedure, the coders all coded a random sample of paragraphs for the number of group-based appeals (n= 150). In another test assessing the coding procedure, they instead got a random sample of already identified group-based appeals, which they then coded on various variables (n= 278; see the appendix for a variable overview). Agreement between coders was eventually tested using Krippendorff's *alpha*, which is bound from 0 to 1 with high values indicating high reliability (Hayes and Krippendorff 2007). Tests show that group-based appeals were identified (α= 0.86) and coded (lowest α= 0.81) with adequate reliability.[9]

All in all, this content analysis produced reliable data on how parties associate or dissociate themselves or other parties with or from 97 different group categories over time. Table 3.1 lists the 20 most frequent categories in the dataset, while a list of all group categories can be found in the supplementary material to Article A. Table 3.1 shows many familiar groups being targeted, including broad social categories like women, young people and workers. But it also reveals more issue-specific categories like parents or patients that political scientists rarely focus on. The category "others", which figures at the bottom of the table, includes all group-based appeals not targeting one of the 96 substantive group categories; that is, it includes all appeals whose target appears less than 5 times in the full dataset.[10]

I use this dataset in different ways. Article A (and Chapter 4) uses the full dataset as it deals with the structure of group emphasis in general. Focusing on group-party ties, however, Articles B and C (and Chapter 5) use only data where the parties associate themselves with groups, as it turns out that cases where parties dissociate themselves from groups or talk about other parties are rare. This is not that surprising given that election manifestos were the preferred source. It seems only natural that negative campaigning would be more common during debates in parliament or on TV and other media outlets than in the party platform (Dolezal et al. 2014). It also seems likely that explicit "group bashing" would take place in closed circles rather than on the national stage (Mendelberg 2001).

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[9] α-scores above 0.67 are accepted by conventional standards but should preferably be 0.80 (see Lacy et al. 2015). Other reliability coefficients such as Cohen's *kappa* produce identical results.

[10] As the appendix to Article A shows, this category is relatively stable across time and parties.

Table 3.1. Descriptive statistics for the 20 most frequently targeted group categories (party-year observations)

Group category	Percentage			Frequency		
	Mean	Max	Min	Mean	Max	Min
Women	4.1	9.2	0.5	12	40	1
Families	3.6	8.1	0	15	49	0
Businesses	3.6	7.7	0.5	14	53	1
The nation	2.9	7.7	0.6	9	23	2
Young people	2.6	5.6	0.7	11	35	1
Poor people	2.5	5.5	0.7	8	20	2
Unions	2.4	8.8	0	6	30	0
Pensioners	2.2	9.9	0	8	52	0
Tenants	2	5.6	0	6	19	0
Parents	2	5.5	0	9	38	0
Disabled people	1.9	4.4	0.3	7	21	1
Workers	1.8	6.6	0	5	18	0
Criminals	1.7	4.4	0	8	33	0
Local people	1.6	4.8	0	9	43	0
Teachers	1.6	3.6	0	6	22	0
Old people	1.6	3	0	5	19	0
British people	1.5	9.9	0	5	14	0
Patients	1.5	5.5	0	6	25	0
Welsh people	1.4	6.2	0	4	14	0
Others (residual category)	24	33	11	100	299	10

Note: The residual category *Others* includes all identified group-based appeals not classified in one of the 96 substantive group categories. The table is from Article A.

3.3. Focus, data sources and analytical strategies: an overview

Table 3.2 provides an overview of the data sources and analytical strategies used in the dissertation. In all the empirical analyses, I rely on the dataset on group-based appeals. Article A focuses on this data alone, while Articles B and C and Chapters 4-5 in this report include data on policy-based appeals as well, primarily from the Manifesto Project Dataset (from now on CMP). Pioneered by Budge and colleagues (Budge et al. 1987; 2001), and now continued as the Manifesto Research on Political Representation Project (Volkens et al. 2013), the CMP codes policy statements, or quasi-sentences, found in election manifestos into 56 different policy categories. The resulting data measures the percentage of all statements related to each policy category and allows scholars to construct policy positions. I use the common left-right index or RILE (Budge and Laver 1992) and other related indicators to measure the left-right redistributive policy positions of the two main British parties from 1964 to 2015 (Bakker and Hobolt 2013, Tavits 2007; Articles B and C).

Chapter 4 also uses data from the Comparative Agendas Project (from now on CAP) on issue emphasis rather than on policy positions. As most previous work on party electoral strategy has focused on how parties sustain or change policy images using policy-based appeals (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Downs 1957; Kitschelt 1994), I am primarily concerned about showing that group-based appeals are not the same as policy positions. However, as the *issue competition perspective* suggests, policy-based appeals are also used by parties to set the issue agenda more broadly (Budge and Farlie 1983; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Green-Pedersen 2007). To further substantiate the point that group-based appeals and policy-based appeals are not just proxies, I therefore also explore the association between issue emphasis and group-based appeals using CAP data on Britain (Froio et al. 2016).[11] This detailed data also comes from hand coding of policy statements found in election manifestos, and offers measures of issue emphasis across more than 200 issue categories (1983-2010). The relevant chapters and articles explain how precisely CAP and CMP data is used.

In order to study the electoral consequences of group-based appeals, I link the data on group-based and policy-based appeals to data on aggregate-level vote shares and individual-level party support. Information on vote shares comes from the CMP, and information on party support comes from two high-quality survey series: the British Election Study (BES, 1964-2015) and the British Social Attitudes surveys (BSA, 1983-2015). Combined, the election coverage of the BES and the yearly coverage of the BSA offer data at 38 time points on around 100,000 respondents.[12] This individual-level data should be seen as pooled, cross-sectional, while the aggregate-level data is considered time-series, cross-sectional. The appropriate modelling strategies are discussed in subsequent chapters and the articles.

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[11] I thank Caterina Froio for generously sharing the British CAP data with me.

[12] The combined BES and BSA dataset was originally coded and used by Evans and Tilley (2012). I thank Geoff Evans and James Tilley for generously sharing this data with me.

Table 3.2. Overview of focus, data sources and analytical strategy of the articles and the summary report

	Focus	Data sources	Analytical strategy
Article A			
Group-based appeals	Trends in group-based appeals	Content-analytic data on group-based appeals	Descriptive univariate analysis over time
Article B			
Electoral consequences	Group-based class appeals and party vote shares	Content-analytic data on group-based appeals	Time-series cross-sectional analysis
		Content-analytic data on policy positions (CMP)	Granger analysis
		Election results data on party vote shares (CMP)	Random effects multilevel analysis
		Observational survey data on individuals' party support (BES and BSA)	
Article C			
Social divisions	Group-based class appeals and class voting	Content-analytic data on group-based appeals	Random effects multilevel analysis
		Content-analytic data on policy positions (CMP)	Granger analysis
		Observational survey data on individuals' party support (BES and BSA)	
The report			
Chapter 4	Presents main results of article A	Content-analytic data on group-based appeals	Descriptive univariate analysis over time
	Focuses also on the relation between group-based appeals and policy positions and issue emphasis	Content-analytic data on policy positions (CMP)	Bivariate analysis
		Content-analytic data on issue emphasis (CAP)	
Chapter 5	Presents main results of articles B and C	See above	See above
Chapter 6	Trends in the Danish Social Democrats' group-based appeals	Content-analytic data on group-based appeals	Descriptive univariate analysis over time
	Group-based class appeals and class voting to-day	Experimental survey data on individuals' candidate evaluations and class identification	Comparing means and regression analysis

Note: BES is the British Election Study; BSA is the British Social Attitudes surveys; CAP is the Comparative Agendas Project; and CMP is the Manifesto Project Dataset (now MARPOR: the Manifestos Research on Political Representation Project).

Chapter 4:
The use of group-based appeals

Casual observation suggests that political parties use group-based appeals, but systematic evidence is lacking. This chapter shows that parties use group-based appeals in ways consistent with electoral incentives. It shows that the use of group-based appeals has increased despite the assumed decline of group politics and that the structure and content of group-based appeals respond to the electoral market in predictable ways. Focusing on redistributive or class politics, it concludes by showing that group-based appeals are more than proxies for policy positions and issue emphasis. The chapter draws on Article A, which should be consulted for more details on theory, methods and findings, but it also introduces new evidence.
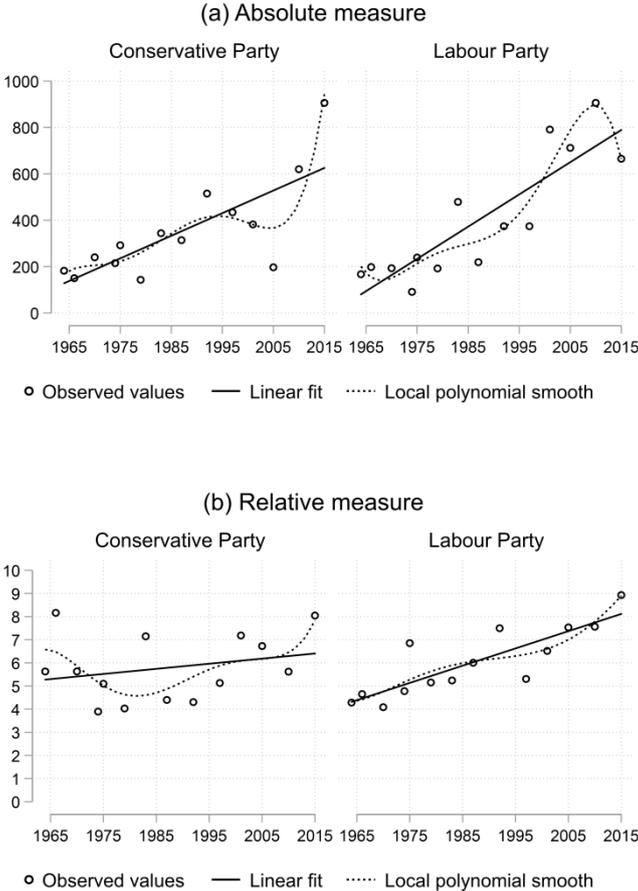
4.1. Group-based appeals over time

On the one hand, it seems puzzling that research on party electoral strategy has overlooked group-based appeals when the voter foundations seem crystal clear. On the other, this is probably rooted in years of comparative electoral research suggesting the demise of group politics (Dalton et al. 1984; Franklin et al, 1992; Inglehart 1997; Stoll 2010; Thomassen 2005). After all, why should scholars focus on something that is becoming irrelevant?

I argue that this view is theoretically misguided. Parties still have every reason to use group-based appeals. In fact, as H1 predicts, we should expect to see an increase since voting has become more volatile. But what does the evidence show? Let us begin by looking at how the frequency of group-based appeals has evolved over time. Panel A in Figure 4.1 shows the observed number of group-based appeals for each party in each election form 1964 to 2015, as well as linear and local polynomial fitted lines to highlight trends.[13]

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[13] See Fan and Gijbels (1996) for more on local polynomial smoothing.

Figure 4.1. The frequency of group-based appeals by party

(a) Absolute measure

Conservative Party | Labour Party

○ Observed values — Linear fit ⋯⋯ Local polynomial smooth

(b) Relative measure

Conservative Party | Labour Party

○ Observed values — Linear fit ⋯⋯ Local polynomial smooth

Note: This figure shows (a) the absolute number of group-based appeals and (b) the estimated number of group-based appeals per page. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the fitted trend based on linear OLS regressions. Dashed lines show the smoothed trend based on kernel-weighted local polynomial regressions. The figure is from article A.

We see that British parties have clearly appealed more and more to groups over the years. In 1964, around 200 group-based appeals were found for both parties, but this number has been much higher in recent years. In 2015, the Conservatives made about 900 group-based appeals in their election manifestos, as did Labour in 2010. Although the frequency fell to 650 for Labour in 2015, appealing to social groups is obviously something parties do. In fact, they do it increasingly. However, while this increase may reflect deliberate choices to intensify group-centered strategies, it could also be the byproduct of a general increase in manifesto size. To no surprise, manifesto size and the raw number of group-based appeals correlate strongly ($r = 0.91$). To account for this, I plot an estimate that adjusts the frequencies for the increasing size of election manifestos in panel B. Specifically, I divide the frequency of group-based appeals in a manifesto by its word count, which gives the fraction of appeals per word. To aid interpretation, I then multiply by 250, which is a

standard estimate of words on a normal page, to obtain an estimate of appeals per page. The results show that group-based appeals are not in decline. In fact, accounting for the tendency of longer manifestos, we see that group-based appeal have become *more* frequent over the years. In the Labour Party's case, the frequency doubled from 1964 to 2015. As indicated by the solid and dashed lines, this upwards trend has been very consistent. For the Conservative Party, there is more fluctuation. Notably, the 1966 and 2015 elections are on par in terms of group-based appeals for this party. Yet in the long run, particularly since the late 1970s, the upward trend is clear as the dashed line shows.
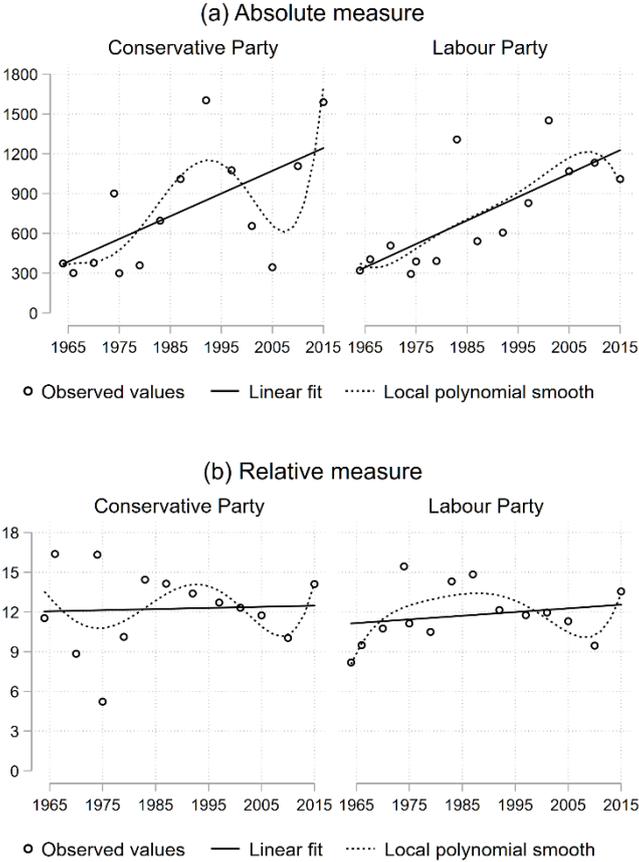
How can we know that this reflects a change in group-based appeals specifically? Even adjusting for manifesto size, the increased frequency could partly reflect stylistic changes to the way manifestos are set up. On this, I note that adjusting the frequency of group-based appeals at the level of words instead of larger units like pages accommodates most such concerns. For example, while the use of pictures and other non-textual content may affect how many appeals fit on a page, this would not affect the fraction of appeals per word. However, the increase we see could also be due to a broader tendency for parties to make more electoral appeals of any kind. Article A does not address this possibility, but I do so here.

I compare the trends found for group-based appeals with the trends in policy-based appeals over the same period. Panel A in Figure 4.2 shows how the frequency of policy-based appeals has evolved over time. To measure policy-based appeals, I draw on the CMP data and use the number of codes allocated to a substantive policy category.[14] This is the raw number of policy-based appeals. As with the group-based appeals, I also show an estimate that adjusts for manifesto size (frequency/word count*250) in panel B. The figure shows that the observed number of policy-based appeals has also been steadily increasing. However, unlike with group-based appeals, the upward trend disappears when I adjust for manifesto size. There are fluctuations but no systematic changes over the long run. From this, it is tempting to infer that the relative importance of group-based and policy-based appeals to party strategy may have shifted, but we should be careful since the data-generating processes of the CMP data and the group-based appeals data differ. We can conclude, however, that the increase in group-based appeals seems genuine: it is neither caused by stylistic changes nor by an increase in electoral appeals, more broadly. Group-based appeals are becoming more frequent in parties' election manifestos.

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[14] I use the CMP variables "total" and "peruncod" to identify the frequency of coded policy statements in each election manifesto.

Figure 4.2. The frequency of policy-based appeals by party

(a) Absolute measure

Conservative Party — Labour Party

○ Observed values — Linear fit ⋯⋯ Local polynomial smooth

(b) Relative measure

Conservative Party — Labour Party

○ Observed values — Linear fit ⋯⋯ Local polynomial smooth

Note: This figure shows (a) the absolute number of policy-based appeals and (b) the estimated number of policy-based appeals per page. It uses the CMP variables "total" and "peruncod" to identify the frequency of coded policy statements in each election manifesto. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the fitted trend based on linear OLS regressions. Dashed lines show the smoothed trend based on kernel-weighted local polynomial regressions.

4.2. Electoral market incentives

If group-based appeals are central to party electoral strategy, they should be responsive to electoral incentives. One change to the British and other electoral markets is that the scope of politics has expanded. This broadened agenda means that many new groups are seeking recognition and influence (Binderkrantz et al., 2016; Kriesi et al., 1995; Mair 2013). At the same time, the scarcity of attention is constant in electoral politics, as parties cannot successfully target all groups at once.

This leads us to H2, which predicts that parties should target an increasing range of different groups, while still selectively emphasizing some groups over others. Panel A in Figure 4.3 shows the range in parties' group-based appeals. Range is measured as the number of group categories containing at least 1 observation for a given party in a given election. We see a clear and consistent

upward trend in the figure. Labour targeted 47 group categories in 1964 compared to 64 in 2015. The Conservatives targeted 49 in 1964 and 75 in 2015.

Figure 4.3. The range and concentration of group-based appeals by party
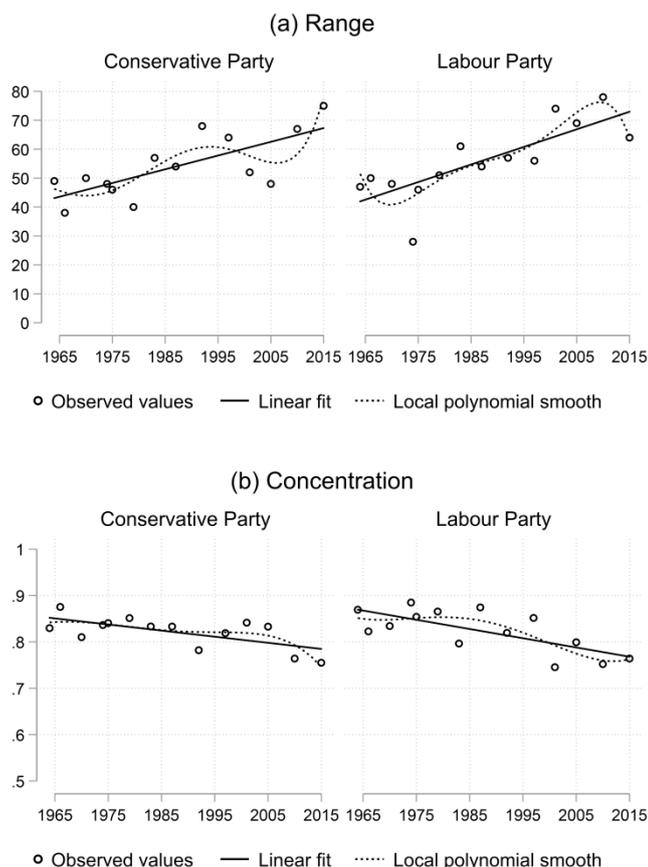
Note: This figure shows (a) the range and (b) concentration of group categories found in the Conservative and Labour election manifestos. The range measure refers to how many of the 97 group categories have at least 1 observation in a given election. The concentration measure refers to Shannon's H, with higher values indicating a more even spread. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the fitted trend based on linear OLS regressions. Dashed lines show the smoothed trend based on kernel-weighted local polynomial regressions. The figure is from Article A.

British parties seem to have widened their electoral appeals in accordance with the incentives. It is worth noting, however, that there is considerable fluctuation. For the Conservatives, for example, the late 1990s actually saw a decrease. This suggests that even if parties adjust in the long term, they retain some room for short-term maneuvering.

Following work on issue agendas (Boydstun et al. 2014), I operationalize selective group emphasis as the distribution of emphasis across group categories. I measure this using the normalized Shannon's H, which is bound from 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating a more even distribution across groups.

Note that the absolute value will be relatively high since group categories have been built inductively from the data. This not a concern here as our interest only lies in how values change (or not) over time. Panel B in Figure 4.3 shows the development. The pattern is fairly stable, but trends do exert a slight drop over the period studied. It appears that group-based appeals show the same kind of selective emphasis that we have long known policy-based appeals to show (Budge and Farlie 1983). It may in fact have become slightly more pronounced over the years.

So far, the results suggest that the use of group-based appeals has increased and widened. Yet, in the context of group politics, most scholars talk about *decline*. Is this not relevant? It is, but the changes have influenced which specific groups are targeted, not whether group-based appeals are used. The best way to see this is to consider workers. In the 1960s, the working class made up around 50 % of the British electorate; today it only makes up 20 % (Evans and Tilley 2017: 7). Hence, workers are now less "electorally relevant" to vote-seeking parties for the simple reason that there are now fewer votes to win from this group (Best 2011: 282). As H3 states, this should be reflected in the way parties use group-based appeals.

In panel A of Figure 4.4, I plot the percentage of group-based appeals targeting workers by party. We see that earlier the two main British parties clearly differed in terms of worker appeals. For example, in the "crisis election" of February 1974, Labour emphasized workers five times more than their Conservative counterparts. Over time, the Labour Party has focused less on workers, and since the 1990s, the two parties have become indistinguishable in terms of worker emphasis. This decline also applies to other traditional target groups in British class politics like poor people and tenants, as Article A shows. Social change did matter to party electoral strategy in the sense that Labour broadened its appeal beyond its declining traditional base (Evans and Tilley 2017; Mair et al. 2004; Przeworski and Sprague 1986).

This of course raises a question. If workers and other groups in the traditional party constituencies in Britain are losing emphasis, which groups are gaining emphasis? Article A shows that it is not other cleavage groups based on place, religion or race but various "new" groups, which so far have eluded scholarly attention. Panel B in Figure 4.4 explores one example: parents. In a long-term perspective, both British parties have increasingly emphasized parents in their group-based appeals (see the solid line). This long-term rise in parent emphasis is likely tied to the broader rise in salience of valence issues like welfare and education (Green 2007). Yet, targeting categories like parents also fits well with the incentives to move beyond traditional constituencies while still reaping the persuasive power of group-based appeals. Recent work

indeed shows that parental identities can be a powerful force in voter decision-making when primed by party elites (Klar 2013).

Figure 4.4. Percentage appeals targeting workers and parents by party
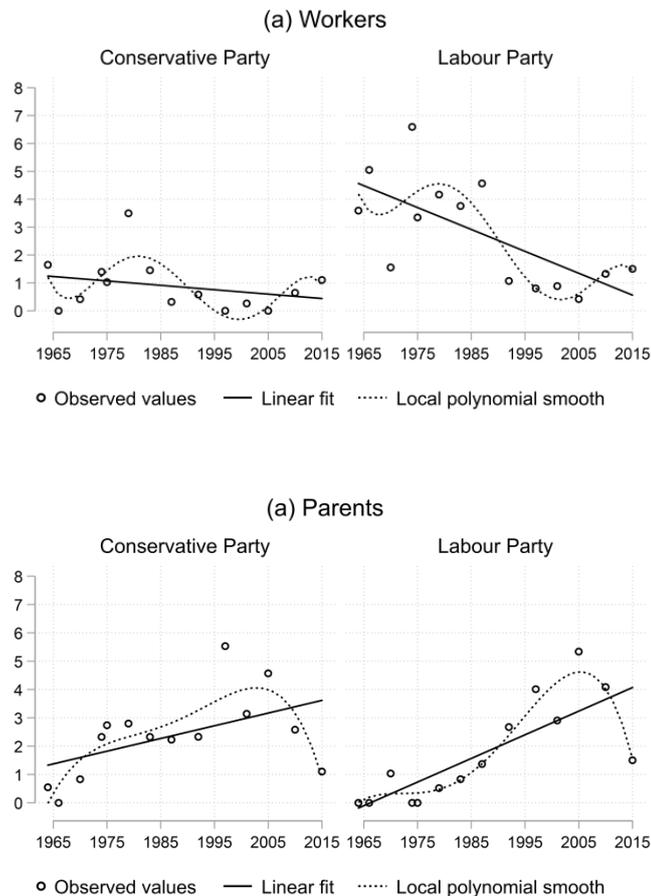
Note: The panels show the percentage of all group-based appeals targeting two group categories: (a) workers and (b) parents. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid line shows the fitted trend based on linear regression (OLS). Dashed line shows the smoothed trend based on kernel-weighted local polynomial regressions. The figure is from Article A.

Despite the long-term patterns, I also note that parent and worker emphasis deviated from the trends in the 2010 and 2015 elections. As redistributive issues came to dominate the public agenda following the financial crisis, workers were increasingly targeted in parties' group-based appeals, while parents became less popular as target group. In line with Evans and Tilley (2012), it thus seems that party electoral strategies may still center on class groups even today if the political climate encourages it.

4.3. Group emphasis, policy positions and issue emphasis

I argue that group-based appeals add something to the election-strategic repertoire of vote-seeking parties. But how distinct are group-based appeals really from policy-based appeals? On the one hand, group emphasis, policy positions and issue emphasis need not be distinct to be important to party electoral strategy. What matters are the electoral effects – that is, whether they can increase votes. On the other hand, group-based appeals do seem more consequential if they are not just proxies for other known party-strategic variables.

Above, we saw that developments of policy-based and group-based appeals were not parallel in terms of frequency. Here, I explore the relation of group emphasis first to policy positions and then to issue emphasis in the specific domain of redistributive politics. I focus on three group categories that were all central to class politics in Britain and other countries: *workers*, *trade unionists*[15] and *businesses*. Figure 4.5 shows how positive emphasis of workers, unions and businesses relates to the two most widely used indicators of left-right, redistributive policy positions. Using CMP data, panels A, B, and C show how group emphasis relates to left-right positions as measured by the RILE index, while panels D, E and F show how group emphasis relates to redistributive positions as measured by the Bakker/Hobolt index.

It is evident that group emphasis and policy positions are related. We generally see higher correlations between left-right position and the class emphasis variables than between redistributive position and class emphasis. But in both cases, it seems that parties are more likely to associate themselves with workers and unions when they take leftist policy positions compared to rightist positions. Likewise, they are most likely to emphasize representational ties to businesses when a rightist position is also taken. The correlations are not perfect, however. This is important because it suggests that it does not suffice to look at only one type of electoral appeal if we want to know about the broader electoral strategy pursued. It is also important in the context of this dissertation for a more technical reason. In order to estimate the electoral consequences that group-based appeals may have *beyond* policy-based appeals, the two cannot be perfectly co-linear. As we see, they are not.

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[15] I treat trade unionists (members) and trade unions (organizations) as one, since they were not distinguished during the coding process for reliability reasons.

Figure 4.5. The association between class-relevant group-based and policy-based appeals
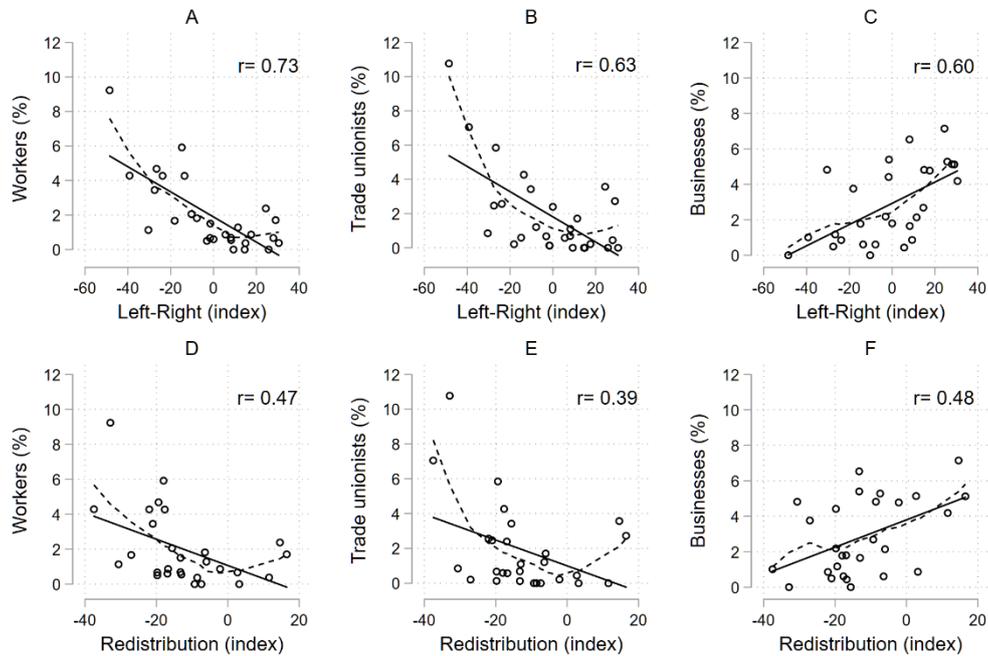
Note: Panels A, B, C show the association between left-right position and positive emphasis of workers, trade unionists and businesses, respectively. Panels D, E, F show the same with respect to redistributive position. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the linear fit. Dashed lines show LOWESS curves. Pearson's *r* is shown in the upper-right corner of each panel.

Another question that I do not cover in the articles concerns how group-based appeals relate to issue emphasis. Are they just another way of setting the issue agenda? This almost certainly differs across group categories. Some are closely linked to one specific issue. For example, when parties talk about patients, they also emphasize the health issue; when parties distance themselves from criminals, they also emphasize the issue of law and order. We can see this by linking CAP data on issue emphasis to the data on group emphasis. The correlations are high between emphasis of patients and the health issue ($r = 0.82$) and between emphasis of criminals and the issue of law and order ($r = 0.68$).[16] Other group categories are not as closely associated with issue emphasis, however.

Table 4.1 revisits the three class groups from above and examines their relation to the four issue emphasis indicators in CAP that seem most relevant

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[16] *Health* is based on issue categories 300-399 and *law and order* is based on issue categories 1200-1299 in the CAP.

to class: labor and employment, social welfare, taxation, and business regula-tion.[17] Looking at the table, we see that none of the group categories are un-conditionally bound to one issue area. It does seem that when parties target workers and trade unionists in their group-based appeals, this is tied to their emphasis of the Labor/Employment issue, but the relationship is moderate (r = 0.39 and 0.40). It also seems that when parties appeal to businesses, this is linked to how parties' emphasize the issues of taxation and business regula-tions, but only to some degree (r = 0.35 and 0.41). Regressing each of the three group categories on all the issue categories together, the R^2 values show that issue emphasis explains around 38 % of the variance in worker emphasis, 23 % in trade unionist emphasis, and 31 % in business emphasis. There is a connection between group and issue emphasis, but they are certainly more than proxies for one another in the redistributive domain.[18]

Table 4.1. The association between group and issue emphasis in the redistributive domain

Issue emphasis (%)	Group emphasis (%)		
	Workers	Trade unionists	Businesses
Labor/Employment	0.39	0.40	0.06
Social welfare	0.08	-0.07	-0.21
Taxation	-0.39	-0.28	0.35
Business regulation	-0.33	0.23	0.41

Note: Entries shown are Pearson correlation coefficients (r). The data on issue emphasis comes from the British part of the CAP. The measure of Labor/Employment is based on issue codes 500-599; Social welfare is based on issue codes 1300-1399; Taxation is based on issue code 107; and business regulation is based on issue codes 1500 and 1521.

[17] *Labor/Employment* is based on issue codes 500-599 of the CAP and includes is-sues such as workplace safety, salary, and benefits like parental leave. *Social welfare* is based on issue codes 1300-1399 and includes issues such as income support schemes and social security. *Taxation* is based on issue code 107. And *business reg-ulation* is based on issue codes 1500 and 1521.

[18] I note the substantial difference in how "old" categories like workers and "new" categories like patients are related to issue emphasis. This points to a broader ques-tion about how similar or different various group categories really are. Do all group categories work the same? Although not explored here, this question is an intriguing avenue for future research on group-based appeals. I elaborate on this in the con-cluding chapter.

In sum, the results in this chapter show that the idea that "parties increasingly forgo appeals to social groups" (Stoll, 2010: 452) does not hold up. To the contrary, even in the source where policy-based appeals are most likely to dominate, the use of group-based appeals has only increased since the 1960s. Moreover, group-based appeals are responsive to change and stability in the electoral markets, they are not interchangeable with available measures of policy positions and issue emphasis. This evidence suggests that group-based appeals are an important and distinct feature of party electoral strategies in Britain.

Chapter 5:
The consequences of
group-based appeals

Political parties adjust group images in the expectation that this will resonate with voters. I study the electoral consequences of group-based appeals targeting one politically relevant group: social class. This chapter first shows that group-based class appeals can help increase party vote shares, particularly in the case of Labour's shift towards a catch-all strategy. Second, it taps into how such appeals influence vote choices by showing that class differences in party support depend on group-based class appeals – again, particularly those of Labour. The chapter draws on Articles B and C, in which additional details on theory, methods and findings may also be found.

5.1. Group-based appeals and electoral benefits

Scholars often study the electoral effects of policy-based appeals (e.g., Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2017; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Tavits 2007). Although comparative research has found only weak and inconsistent support for the policy-positioning perspective (Adams 2012), there is widespread agreement that leftist parties reaped short-run vote gains as they moved from class-centric to catch-all strategies (e.g., Kitschelt 1994; Mair et al. 2004; Przeworski and Sprague 1986). As Karreth et al. (2012) argue, there is hardly any better example of this than the Labour Party in Britain.

As argued in Chapter 3, however, parties care about both group and policy images and use group-based appeals in addition to policy-based appeals to increase support. This also applies to the case of British catch-all politics. It is well known that the major parties took more centrist positions in the second half of the twentieth century, especially Labour during the 1990s (Denver et al. 2012; Evans and Tilley 2017; Green 2007). But the data on group-based appeals shows that this is only half the story. For example, the percentage of Labour's group-based appeals targeting trade unionists dropped from 11 % in 1974 to less than 1 % in 2010. As Chapter 4 showed, this same decline also occurred for workers as a target group. If catch-all strategies entailed a change in both policy and group image, we can also expect that any electoral benefits came not only from policy-based but also from group-based appeals (see H4). After all, group-based appeals aim to increase vote totals.

I test this in an aggregate-level analysis of party vote shares from 1964 to 2015. As explained in Article B, a catch-all strategy is essentially about projecting an inclusive and moderate party image. In Britain, trade unionists and workers were important group categories in this process since they were at the core of parties' class images. While Labour was seen as representing working-class trade unionist, the Conservatives were seen as *not* representing them (Butler and Stokes 1969; Denver et al. 2012; Evans and Tilley 2017).[19] For Labour then, a catch-all strategy meant downplaying its ties to the working-class trade unionist base in order not to risk alienating the middle class (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). For the Conservatives, however, the same strategy meant to establish positive relations to trade unionists and workers with whom the party had otherwise been at odds. I measure how inclusive group images are by first taking the percentage of group-based appeals targeting trade unionists and workers, respectively. I then multiply this by a party variable, where −1 denotes the Labour Party and +1 denotes the Conservative Party, as Labour needed to downplay its ties to trade-unionist workers to moderate the group image, whereas the Conservatives needed to highlight and establish such ties to moderate theirs. The same is done with policy-based appeals. Using CMP data, I measure how inclusive policy images are by multiplying redistributive and left-right policy positions with the party variable from above. Again, this takes into account that a more rightwing position by Labour meant a more centrist policy image, whereas the Conservatives achieved the same by adopting a more left-wing position.[20] The more positive the value on either trade-unionist emphasis, worker emphasis, redistributive policy or left-right policy, the more inclusive the parties' group and policy images.

Did parties in Britain benefit from a catch-all strategy contingent on group-based appeals? Did it pay off to moderate group as well as policy images? Figure 5.1 compares the marginal effect on vote changes for all four group and policy indicators, by party. To facilitate direct comparisons, estimates show vote gains or losses due to a one standard deviation increase in

[19] Another aspect of class images is middle-class representation, of course, but here the parties are less distinct both in Britain and elsewhere (Evans and Tilley 2017; Dalton 2014; Nicholson and Segura 2012). As Przeworski (1985: 100-101) argues, the class divide between leftist and rightist parties has revolved primarily around the working class and its positive relations to leftist parties and negative relations to rightist parties.

[20] Given the distributions on the policy variables, more "right-wing" for Labour and more "left-wing" for the Conservatives effectively means a more centrist position on the policy scales.

trade unionist emphasis, worker emphasis, redistributive policy or left-right policy.[21]

Figure 5.1. Comparing the marginal effect of group emphasis and policy position on vote changes
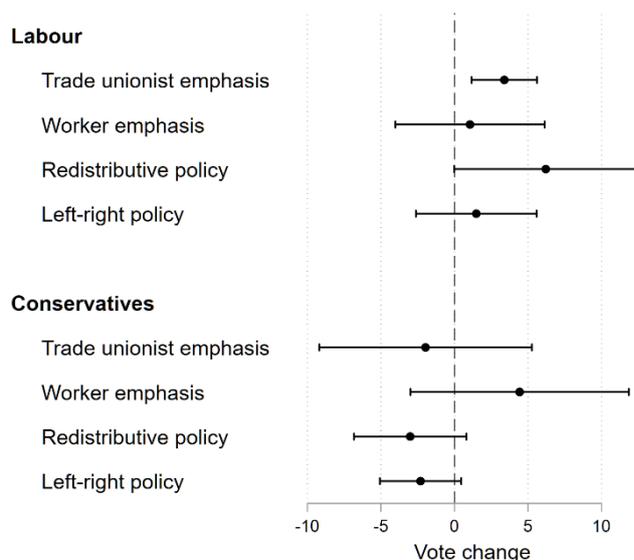
Note: Dots are based on OLS estimates and show marginal effects on vote changes for a one standard deviation increase in the group and policy variables. Bands are based on election-clustered standard errors and show 90 % confidence intervals due to the small sample size. Labour's *redistributive policy* is on the margin of significance (p = 0.05, one-sided test). Labour's *trade unionist emphasis* is significant at the 95 % level as well. The figure is from Article B.

Overall, it appears that parties can indeed benefit electorally from using group-based appeals, at least in some circumstances. As seen in the top half of the figure, we would predict the Labour vote to increase 3.39 % (percentage points) for a one standard deviation change in *trade unionist emphasis* (σ = 3.3 %). This effect is substantial. It is equivalent in size to the mean change in party vote shares between any two elections during the period studied. Not surprisingly, the results also show that Labour benefitted from using policy-based appeals. Specifically, we would predict that a one standard deviation increase in *redistributive policy* (σ = 15.7 points) is associated with a 6.21 %

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[21] Besides the interaction between a party variable and the group emphasis or policy position variable in question, the models reported in Figure 5.1 control for the "alternative explanation". For example, I estimate the marginal effect of trade-unionist emphasis by party, while controlling for the party-wise interactions with both redistributive and left-right policy. The models also include controls for GDP growth, governing status and their interaction, as well as a lagged dependent variable. See Article B for more details on variables and model specification.

higher vote total.[22] For the two other indicators, *worker emphasis* and *left-right policy*, there are no significant effects. We also see that the Conservatives did not benefit from establishing ties to working-class trade unionists or from taking centrist positions at all.

Previous work has not been wrong to claim that centrist redistributive positions were key to the success of the Labour catch-all strategy, but even in this case – which represents the single best case in support of the policy positioning perspective – we also find an electoral return from group-based appeals.

If Labour did use group-based appeals as part of its successful catch-all strategy, then we should see voters outside the working class trade unionist base respond most positively. Attracting these outgroup voters was the very purpose of the strategy in the first place (Evans and Tilley 2017; Kitschelt 1994; Mair et al. 2004; Przeworski and Sprague 1986). I test this at the individual level using pooled survey data from the BES and the BSA. Figure 5.2 plots the marginal effect of the group-based appeals on Labour support (relative to all other parties) among the working-class trade unionist base and among other voters. The estimates show changes in Labour support as the independent variables increase one standard deviation (as in the aggregate analysis above). We see noticeable subgroup differences. Labour's de-emphasis of trade-unionist and worker ties was clearly most effective among voters not belonging to the working-class trade-unionist base.

Specifically, we would predict only 2.9 % increase in Labour support within the traditional constituency for a one standard deviation change in trade unionist emphasis (σ = 3.1 %), while support increases by 7.7 % among other voters. The difference is equally striking for worker emphasis. As Labour puts one standard deviation less emphasis on workers (σ = 2.7 %), support among the base increases by 3.3 %. Outside the traditional constituency, however, it increases as much as 9.6 %. All group differences reported in Figure 5.2 are significant at the 1 % level. In sum, it appears that the aggregate vote gains Labour won by adjusting the group image came especially from outside the base: the Labour Party expanded its catchment area using group-based appeals.[23]

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[22] Note that this estimate is on the margin of statistical significance, with the p-value = 0.05 (one-sided test).

[23] Although the finding that Labour's catch-all strategy was most effective among voters outside the Labour base fits with H4, it is somewhat surprising that working-class trade unionist responded positively at all. While I do not probe this matter further here, one explanation could be that it takes a more sustained change in group image to disrupt the loyalty of the traditional base (see Karreth et al. 2012).

Figure 5.2. The marginal effect of Labour's group emphasis and policy position within the working-class trade-unionist base and among other voters
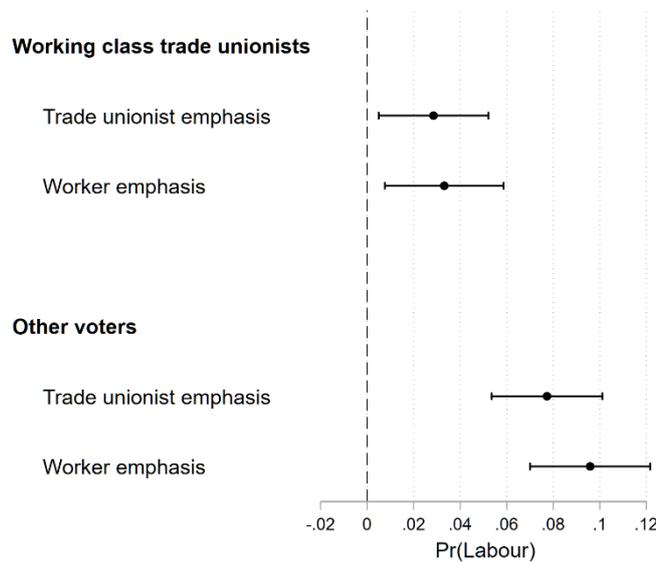
Note: The dependent variable here is Labour support. Dots show the marginal effect on Labour support for a one standard deviation increase in the group emphasis variables. Bands show 95 % confidence intervals. Results are based on random effects linear probability models on 99,334 individuals in 38 clusters (within and between-survey variance is not shown). All interaction terms in these models are significant at the 1 % level. The figure is from Article B.

5.2 Group-based appeals and the social divisions of politics

Vote shares are not the only electoral outcome that group-based appeals should influence. Recent work has shown how catch-all policy strategies in Britain changed the basis of electoral choice: while vote choices used to follow naturally from class positions, the convergence of the main parties on centrist policy positions has weakened class differences substantially (Evans and Tilley 2012; 2017). To this work, the class basis of electoral choice is policy responsive, varying over time due to "differences in the redistributive policy choice offered to voters" (Evans 2000: 411). As group voting in general, however, class voting is not only based on policy views but also on group orientations (Achen and Bartels 2016; Heath 2015; Kinder and Kam 2009; Miller et al. 1992; see Huddy 2013: 751–3). As H5 states, if group-based appeals really work by tapping into the deep-seated and natural group orientations of voters, we should expect them to shape class voting just as policy-based appeals do.

Testing H5, I focus again on Labour's worker emphasis, but I also focus on its business emphasis. The core idea in leftist parties' catch-all strategies was

to downplay particularistic ties to its traditional base, most notably workers (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Yet, as Article C shows, the Labour catch-all strategy also involved the party associating itself with a traditional outgroup, businesses. In 1966, Labour did not associate itself with businesses at all in its election manifesto. In 2015, business emphasis was at 4 % – twice the worker emphasis that year. I expect this emphasis of "new" business ties to weaken class difference in party support as it cross-cuts the stereotypical group-party alignments. Conversely, I expect that classes differ most when Labour emphasizes its "old" working-class ties because this primes people to vote along stereotypical lines.

Using the pooled BES and BSA data, I estimate how Labour's worker and business emphasis influences class differences in a multi-level analysis. Figure 5.3 shows the marginal difference in Labour support (relative to Conservative support) between workers and self-employed – the two most distinct class groups – over the observed range of positive worker and business emphasis. [24] The estimates here tell us how much more likely workers are to support Labour compared to self-employed voters. Overall, we see that the gap in party support between workers and the self-employed narrows substantially as the Labour Party downplays "old" ties to workers and highlights "new" ties to businesses, and vice versa.

As we can see from the upward slope in the left-hand panel in Figure 5.3, it matters whether Labour emphasizes its working-class ties. Holding policy effects constant, we would predict that when working-class emphasis is around its highest observed value of 9.2 %, workers and self-employed differ by 50 % in Labour support compared to a gap of only 32 % when worker emphasis is at the lowest observed value of 0.5 %. The right-hand panel concerns Labour's business emphasis. We see a declining marginal effect of class over the range of business emphasis, as expected. Again, controlling for policy effects, we would predict that when business ties are emphasized the least, the working class and the self-employed differ by 39 %, whereas the gap drops to 31 % when business ties are emphasized the most.

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[24] Besides the interactions between class and worker or business emphasis, the models reported in Figure 5.2 also account for the Labour *position* as well the Labour-Conservative *difference* on left-right policy as the main "alternative explanations" (Evans and Tilley 2017; Jansen et al. 2013). Consequently, I estimate the marginal effect of both group emphasis variables while controlling for the class-wise interactions with both redistributive and left-right policy. The models also control for sex and birth cohort. See Article C for more details on variables and model specification.

Figure 5.3. Marginal difference between workers and self-employed in Labour support across worker and business emphasis, controlling for policy effects.
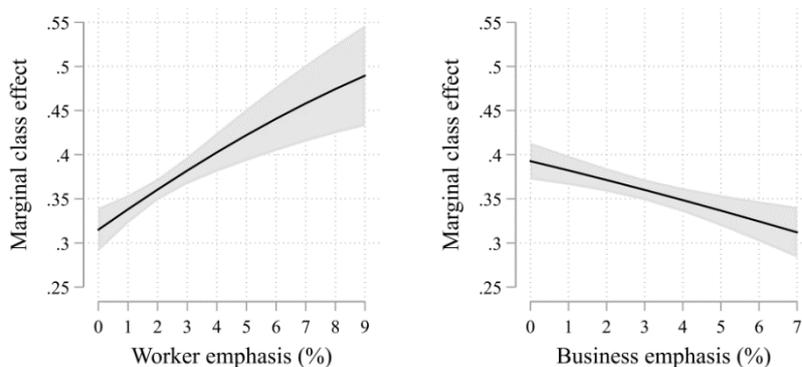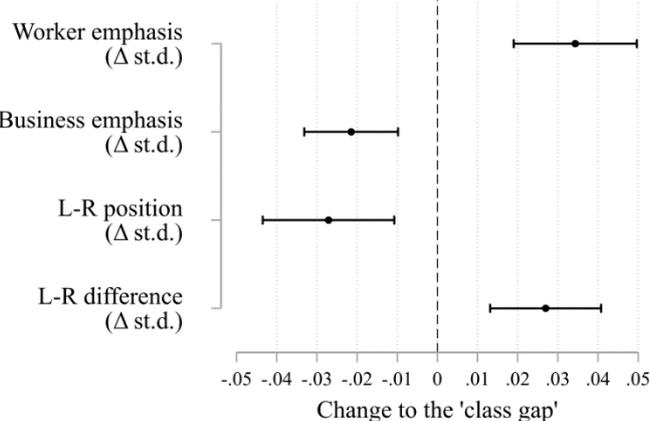

Note: This figure shows the marginal effect of class on Labour support (relative to the Conservatives) across the observed range of Labour's worker and business emphasis. Estimates (lines) and 95 % confidence intervals (bands) are based on random effects logit models. Source: BES and BSA surveys 1964-2015 (N = 87993). The figure is from Article C.

One way to gauge the size of the effects is to compare with the policy effects that we already know matter. I do so by standardizing the policy and group variables on identical scales before estimating interactions between class and worker emphasis, business emphasis, left-right policy position, or left-right policy difference, respectively.[25] The results are shown in Figure 5.4, which plots how much the gap in Labour support between working-class and self-employed voters changes when the group and policy variables increase one standard deviation from the mean.

The figure shows that the influence of policy-based and group-based appeals is similar. However, Labour's worker emphasis seems to have the strongest effect. For a one standard deviation change in Labour's worker emphasis (around 2 %), the partisan gap between the working class and the self-employed changes by 3.4 % (percentage points). For business emphasis, a one standard deviation change is associated with a 2.1 % change in the class gap, while for Labour's left-right position and the Labour-Conservative left-right difference we see a 2.8 % and a 2.7 % change to the gap, respectively. One the one hand, this confirms that the existing policy account of declining class voting is valid. On the other, it suggests that an account focused on group orientations, group images and group-based appeals has about the same explanatory power.

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[25] The models are random effects linear probability models predicting Labour support (see Article C for more details). Again, I control for policy-based appeals in the estimates pertaining to worker and business emphasis, and vice versa.

Figure 5.4. Comparing the moderating effect of group-based and policy-based class appeals

Note: This figure shows the how the marginal difference in Labour support between workers and self-employed changes for a one standard deviation increase in Labour's worker emphasis, Labour's business emphasis, Labour's left-right position, or the Labour-Conservative difference in left-right position. Dots are estimates from random effects linear probability models, and bands are the 95 % confidence intervals. The figure is from Article C.

Overall, the results in this chapter show that the electoral consequences of group-based appeals are varied and profound. Pursuing a catch-all group strategy designed to broaden the group image, the Labour Party increased its vote share, raised support outside the base, and changed the class basis of electoral choice. We may often assume that policies are the "currency" (Kitschelt 2011: 620) in electoral markets, but the group theory of party electoral strategy has a great deal to offer as well.

Chapter 6:
Additional evidence

The previous chapters presented the main findings of this dissertation. Although the articles report additional analyses, including robustness and endogeneity tests, that boost our confidence in the results, there are certain limits to how far the data at hand can take us. In this chapter, I bring in two new datasets to further substantiate the group theory of party electoral strategy. First, I use data from a content analysis of the Danish Social Democrats' party programs between 1961 and 2004 to explore if parties in countries beyond Britain also use group-based appeals in accordance with electoral incentives. Second, I use data from a large-scale survey experiment to address the potential bias from omitted variables and reverse causality that always loom in observational evidence. Further, since this experimental data concerns the present rather than the past, it gives us an indication of what the effect of group-based appeals would be today.

6.1. Moving beyond Britain

Britain was a good setting to explore the use and consequences of group-based appeals for the first time. However, the argument I advance is not confined to this case. The basic incentives emanating from people's group orientations are universal and constant in politics, and the changes in electoral markets, which I discussed, seem applicable to advanced industrial democracies in general (Dalton 2014). However, the majoritarian two-and-a-half party system also distinguishes Britain from most other countries and may shape party electoral incentives (e.g., Karreth et al. 2012; Kitschelt 1994). Do parties in proportional, multiparty systems use group-based appeals in a way comparable to the British parties?

I use data from a content analysis of the Danish Social Democrats' party programs in the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s, which was carried out for an article published elsewhere (Thau 2017). Based on the coding procedure used on British election manifestos, two hired coders hand coded six party programs from the 1960s, 1980s and 2000s, producing group emphasis measures across 44 predefined categories.[26] I explore three trends corresponding to H1, H2 and

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[26] Coding was done by two hired coders from August 2016 to September 2016. Intercoder reliability was tested following the procedure described in Chapter 3 and showed satisfactory results (identifying appeals: α = 0.87; coding appeals: lowest α = 0.85). Two types of party programs were coded: *Principprogrammerne* (years

H3: the frequency of group-based appeals, the range and concentration of group categories targeted, and the emphasis put on specific groups.

In Figure 6.1, panel A plots the raw frequency of group-based appeals, while panel B adjusts for the size of party programs (as in Chapter 4). We see that the Social Democrats have increased their group-based appeals substantially over the years. From 158 in the 1960s, the party made 811 appeals in the 2000s. This has coincided with a tendency for party programs to increase in size. Adjusting for this, panel B shows that the estimated number of group-based appeals on each page is constant at around seven throughout the period. This diverges from the increase found in Britain, but the main point here is that nothing suggests that group-based appeals are used any less than previously.

What about the incentives to widen appeals while still selectively targeting some groups over others? The two panels in Figure 6.2 show the range and concentration of group-based appeals. Overall, the patterns are similar to the British case.

Figure 6.1. The frequency of group-based appeals
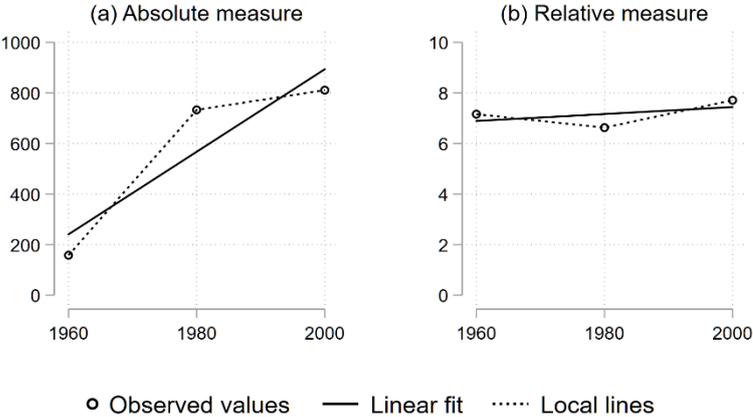
Note: This figure shows (a) the absolute number of group-based appeals and (b) the estimated number of group-based appeals per page. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the fitted trend based on linear OLS regressions. Dashed lines show are straight lines between the neighboring time points.

Since the 1960s, the Social Democratic Party has targeted more different group categories, as the solid line indicates, presumably as a response to increased demands for group representation (Binderkrantz et al. 2016; Mair

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1961, 1977 and 2004) and *Arbejdsprogrammerne* (years 1961, 1980 and 2000). The resulting data is pooled according to the decades 1960s, 1980s and 2000s. The period studied ends in 2004 as the Danish Social Democrats have since switched from printed to web-based party programs, which are not archived.

2013).[27] However, group emphasis was not evened out. In fact, as implied by the smaller Shannon's H for the 2000s, we find the same indication as in Britain that selective group emphasis may have increased slightly. The range and concentration of group-based appeals change the way we should expect – also beyond Britain.

Figure 6.2. The range and concentration of group-based appeals

Note: This figure shows the (a) range and (b) concentration of group-based appeals. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the fitted trend based on linear OLS regressions. Dashed lines show are straight lines between the neighboring time points.
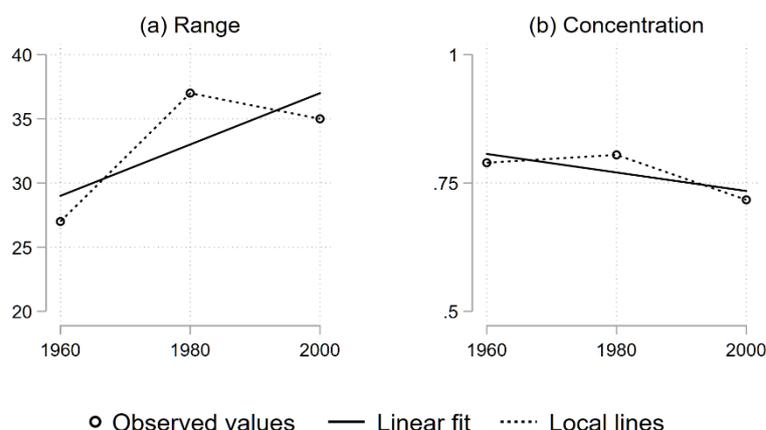
Finally, I consider changes in which specific groups are targeted. Like the British case, the Danish working class has declined since the 1960s, other group categories have been increasingly politicized, and welfare issues in particular have become more salient (Green-Pedersen 2006, 2011). Unlike the British case, however, workers and parents have never really been frequent targets in the Social Democratic Party's group-based appeals (see Thau 2017). As expected, worker emphasis does decrease and parent emphasis does increase over time, but the percentages are small throughout the period.[28] Here, I instead explore two categories in Figure 6.3 that seem related to workers and parents and underwent substantial change: employees and children. We see

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[27] The curve flattens between the 1980s and 2000s. This could reflect that the Danish Social Democrats did not take the catch-all strategy as far as British Labour, due perhaps to differences in the party competitive setting (Karreth et al 2012), or it could reflect that almost all the group categories predetermined in the codebook were already used by the 1980s (37 out of 42 substantive categories, in total), creating a ceiling effect.

[28] Specifically, the highest observed value of parent emphasis is around 2 %, and worker emphasis is never more than 0.5 %. The latter is somewhat surprising since Denmark is said to be among the countries where the class basis of politics was particularly strong (Knutsen 2006).

that the Social Democrats clearly downplayed ties to employees and high-lighted ties to children. From 7 % in the 1960s, employee emphasis dropped to only 2 % in the 2000s. The party's emphasis on children conversely rose from 4 % to 12 % over the same period. It seems the Social Democratic Party took stock of the changing market incentives and adjusted its party electoral strategy to meet new demands for group representation.

In sum, the evidence from Denmark corroborates that from Britain and supports H1, H2 and H3. The use of group-based appeals is not confined to the British case. Despite some differences, the Danish Social Democrats have used group-based appeals as we should expect based on the change and stability of electoral incentives in Denmark. The group theory of party electoral strategy seems to travel to at least one proportional, multiparty system.

Figure 6.3. Percentage appeals targeting employees and children
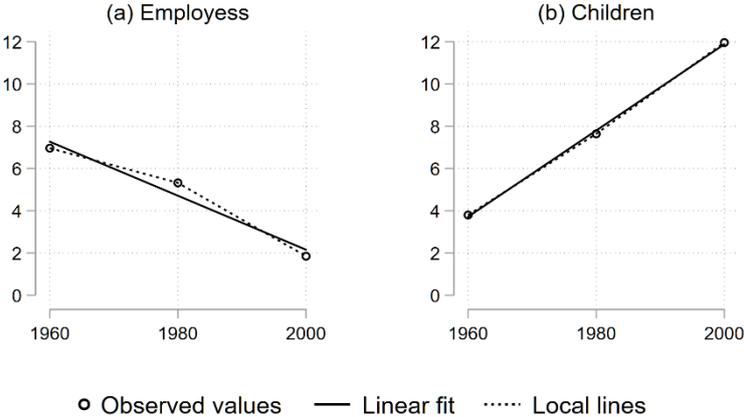
Note: This figure shows the percentage of group-based appeals targeting two categories: (a) employees and (b) children. Circles show the observed value for each party-year observation. Solid lines show the fitted trend based on linear OLS regressions. Dashed lines show are straight lines between the neighboring time points.

6.2. Isolating electoral effects

The theory and evidence in previous chapters suggest that group-based appeals mattered in some of the most striking changes to electoral politics. For example, the decline of class voting in Britain was influenced by Labour shifting its group emphasis away from the working class towards groups outside its base, like businesses. Or was it? Since the change in group-based class appeals and the change in class voting occurred simultaneously and alongside other changes, it is difficult to know. In principle, electoral appeals could influence as well as be influenced by class voting, and factors like the declining

size of the working class or increased state provision of welfare could be underlying causes of changes in both party strategy and class voting. Do group-based class appeals really shape the class basis of electoral choice, as H5 suggests?

Article C discusses the endogeneity issue in some detail. Like previous work, it suggests that it is theoretically implausible that class voting shapes party electoral strategy (see Evans and Tilley 2012). Unlike previous work, however, it also presents empirical evidence from a Granger test showing that group-based class appeals *do not* respond to changes in class voting (Granger 1969).[29] Yet, we can take our effort to address reverse causality further using survey experimental evidence, which also helps to address the omitted variables issue. The experimental design rules out both sources of bias due to random assignment to treatments (Druckman et al. 2011).

I use data from co-authored work in progress testing if group-based class appeals influence class differences in party support, even today (co-authors are Josh Robison, Rune Stubager and James Tilley). We fielded a survey in Denmark that asked people what class they belong to before randomly assigning them to different treatments, varying the group-based class appeals of the Social Democrats and the Liberals (called Venstre) – the two parties leading the left-wing and right-wing party blocs, respectively.[30] In our 2 x 4 study design, a total of 1500 participants were asked to evaluate both a Social Democratic and a Venstre candidate (the ordering was random). For each party candidate, the participants received one of four treatments, at random.

The first treatment only indicated the candidate's party affiliation (*baseline condition*). The second treatment exposed respondents to a group-based appeal that reinforced stereotypical class-party alignments (*group condition*). For example, the Social Democratic candidate said that politics had been "too focused on the upper middle class, lately" and that it was "now time to prioritize people from the working and lower middle classes". The third treatment exposed people to a stereotypical policy-based appeal, where the Social Democratic candidate, for example, proposed a tax-cut for "incomes under DKK

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[29] Note that Article B also uses the Granger test to rule out that parties' electoral success shapes their use of group-based appeals. As H4 predicts, it is the other way around.

[30] The data collection, which took place from December 2017 to January 2018, was administered by YouGov, and respondents were sampled from an internet panel of 90,000 participants (approximately representative of the adult Danish population). Using stratified random sampling, we oversampled working-class and upper-middle-class respondents to ensure adequate group sizes. This survey extends and replicates a previous survey that we ran in June 2017 (more details are available in Robison et al. 2018).

300,000" (i.e., the lower end of the income distribution in Denmark) (*policy condition*). The fourth treatment exposed people to both the group-based and policy-based appeal to gauge their combined effect (*group + policy condition*).

I first look at how the difference or gap in candidate evaluations between working-class and upper-middle-class voters change as a consequence of parties' electoral appeals. Figure 6.4 plots the marginal effect of subjective class affiliation on the *sympathy* and *propensity to vote* for the given candidate across the four treatments.[31] A positive estimate indicates how much more upper-middle-class voters prefer the party candidate compared to working-class voters. A negative estimate conversely indicates that working-class voters prefer a given candidate more than the upper middle class.

Figure 6.4. The marginal difference in candidate evaluations between working-class and upper-middle-class voter by treatment
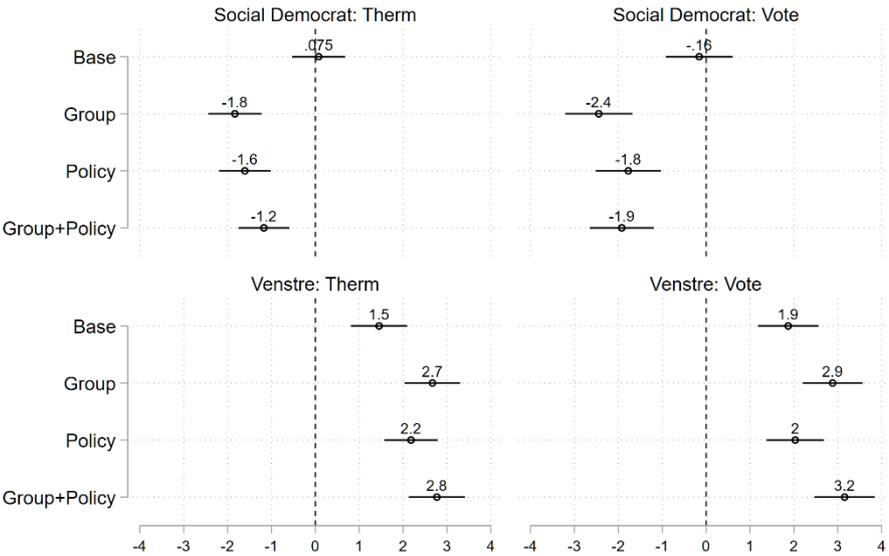
Note: This figure shows how the difference in candidate evaluations between working-class and upper-middle-class voters vary across treatments. The outcomes are *sympathy* and *propensity to vote* (both run from 0 to 10 with higher values indicating more positive evaluations). Dots are marginal effects and bands are 95 % confidence intervals.

For the Social Democratic candidate, we see no differences between working-class and upper-middle-class voters to begin with. It appears that candidates running for the Social Democrats nowadays cross-cut traditional class boundaries. However, once the stereotypical group image is primed, a substantial class gap emerges. Faced with group-based class appeals, the working class

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[31] Both outcomes are measured on 11-point scales. *Candidate sympathy* is measured from 0 "dislike the candidate very much" to 10 "like the candidate very much", while the *propensity to vote* measure runs from 0 "very unlikely to ever vote for the candidate" to 10 "very likely to ever vote for the candidate".

likes the Social Democratic candidate 18 % (percentage points) more than the upper middle class and is also 24 % more likely to vote for the candidate. As we saw previously, the group-based class appeals easily match the effect of the policy-based ones (there is no additional effect of combining the two electoral appeals).

A similar pattern emerges for the Venstre candidate, although less pronounced. Voters from opposing classes clearly differ in preferences at the outset (sympathy = 15 %, vote = 19 %). But as the Venstre candidate associates himself with the upper middle class at the expense of the working and lower middle classes, the class gap increases even further. Specifically, the voter differences increase to 28 % in sympathy and 29 % voting propensity for group-based class appeals, while the policy-based class appeals do not significantly amplify class differences for this party. If tax policy is combined with group emphasis, however, class differences increase to 28 % and 32 %, respectively. For both the Social Democratic and Venstre candidate, the increases in class differences from the *baseline condition* to the *group condition* are all significant at the 5 % level.

If party electoral strategies can polarize social classes, an immediate question is whether it is working-class voters, upper-middle-class voters, or both groups that react. Who is moved by the electoral appeals? Figure 6.5 shows how candidate evaluations change across treatments *within* the working class and upper middle class, respectively. Panel A concerns the Social Democratic candidate and panel B the Venstre candidate. There are substantial differences in how the classes react. Comparing the baseline condition to the other conditions, we see that working-class voters are much more positive towards the Social Democratic candidate when working class ties are emphasized. Upper-middle-class voters, on the other hand, remain unmoved by the electoral appeals (the estimates all fall on the same vertical line). Although patterns are again slightly less pronounced, we also see for the Venstre candidate that working-class reactions are generally strongest. For example, the mean Venstre candidate sympathy among workers falls from 3.5 to 2.4 in the face of stereotypical appeals, while it is nearly unchanged among the upper middle class (from 4.9 to 5.1 and insignificant).

Figure 6.5. Predicted mean candidate evaluations by treatment and subjective class belonging
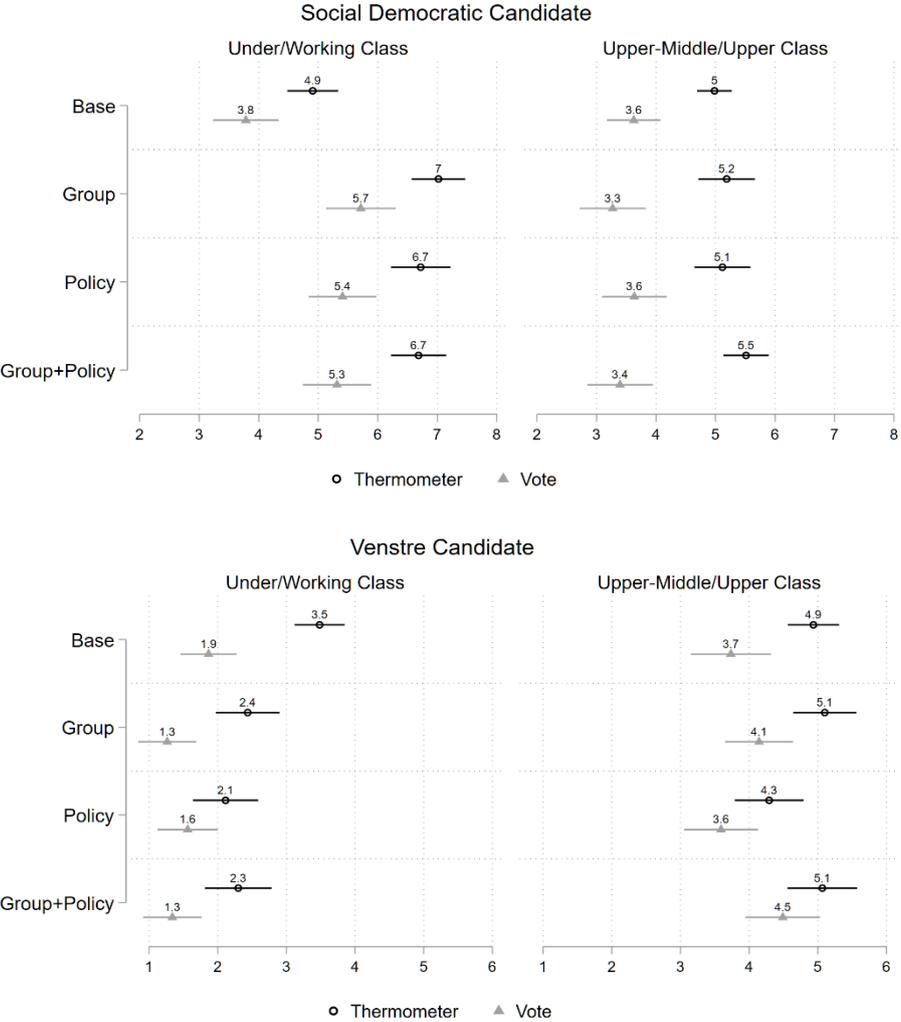
Note: This figure shows how candidate evaluations change within each class across the treatments. The outcomes are *sympathy* and *propensity to vote* (both run from 0 to 10 with higher values indicating more positive evaluations). Dots are the mean candidate evaluations, and bands are 95 % confidence intervals.

This all boosts our confidence that group-based class appeals do indeed resonate with voters but also suggests that reactions may differ across groups. Most important, however, the effects found here are not biased by omitted variables or reverse causality; group-based appeals can change the class basis of electoral, as H5 predicts. The evidence does not address the decline of class voting in Britain specifically but, rather, shows that group-based class appeals work beyond that case. Even today, in a country where class voting has also waned (Knutsen 2006), we see that class orientations can be successfully targeted in the electoral appeals of vote-seeking parties.

Chapter 7:
Conclusions

How do political parties appeal for votes and what are the electoral consequences of such appeals? This key question ultimately concerns how decision-makers in democracies around the world reach and retain their positions of power (Schumpeter 1942). Building on one of the most well-established ideas in electoral research (Achen and Bartels 2016; Butler and Stokes 1969; Campbell et al. 1960; Kinder and Kam 2009; Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), this dissertation advances a group theory of party electoral strategy. I argue that since voters are group-oriented, often judging parties based on which groups they are thought to represent, vote-seeking parties use group-based appeals to change or sustain group images so that the public sees what they want. This theory was substantiated using a unique dataset from a content analysis of British election manifestos to test a range of observable implications in a long-term perspective. This final chapter recaps the findings, lays out their implications, and suggests three avenues for future research.

7.1. Recap of the findings

The main empirical analysis found strong and consistent evidence to support the group theory of party electoral strategy in the British case. As for the use of group-based appeals, I showed that group-based appeals are widely, even increasingly, used, and that parties use them in accordance with electoral incentives. This supports H1, H2 and H3 (see Chapter 4 and Article A). I further demonstrated that group-based appeals are not merely proxies for the policy-based appeals that previous work has focused on (see Chapter 4). In other words, we seem to be dealing with a distinct way that parties appeal for votes.

As for the consequences of group-based appeals, I showed that the electoral success of catch-all party strategies came not just from policy-based but also from group-based appeals, which supports H4 (see Chapter 5 and Article B). Finally, supporting H5, I also showed how the decline in class voting was a consequences of changes in both policy and group images (see Chapter 5 and Article C). In short, a theory focused on group orientations, group images and group-based appeals helps explain some of the most substantial changes to politics in advanced industrial democracies.

7.2. Implications

These findings hold several implications for research on democratic politics. Previous work has advanced our understanding of party electoral strategy by analyzing how policy-based appeals are used to adopt certain positions or set the issue agenda (e.g., Abou-Chadi and Orlowski 2016; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Budge and Farlie 1983; Dolezal et al. 2014; Downs 1957; Green-Pedersen 2007; Kriesi et al. 2008; Pardos-Prado and Dinas 2010; Wagner 2012). Yet, few would deny that policies are only one of the ways that parties appeal to voters. Even so, scholars rarely treat parties' electoral appeals as an empirical question. As Rohrschneider (2002: 367) notes, few address just how "parties try to attract voters" in the first place; that is, "their targeting strategies". The literature has been content with assuming that electoral appeals equal policy statements. One contribution of this dissertation is thus to argue and show that policy is not the only "currency" (Kitschelt 2011: 620) in the electoral market. Voters may indeed be policy-motivated, but they are also group-oriented, and parties take advantage of this. In the end, election-oriented parties "have an incentive to make group-based appeals because such appeals can attract votes" (Dickson and Scheve 2006: 6).

Although this is important on its own, it may also help solve the emerging puzzle in the literature that party electoral strategies do not seem all that effective (Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2017; Adams 2012). A growing number of studies "identify only weak and inconsistent evidence of voter reactions" (Adams 2012: 403). This comes with a qualification, however, in that it applies to *policy* strategies specifically. Addressing this puzzle, a number of recent studies have focused on the factors conditioning the effect of policy-based appeals. This work identifies time lags, party family differences, voter differences, and issue-specific effects (e.g., Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2017; Adams et al. 2006; Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009; Bawn and Somer-Topcu 2012; Ezrow et al. 2014). This dissertation suggest an alternative angle. While the question about when policy-based appeals work is certainly interesting, scholars should also start asking what else might matter (Somer-Topcu 2015). In the end, this could help to resolve a "fundamental dilemma for research on party competition" (Abou-Chadi and Wagner 2017: 3). Attention to *non-policy* strategies like group-based appeals may indeed reveal that parties have more control over their own electoral fortunes than we were starting to believe.

The group theory of party electoral strategy has implications for the voter side of electoral politics as well. On the one hand, parties use group-based appeals because voters are group-oriented. On the other hand, group-based appeals also shape the social basis of electoral choice. The idea that voting is

group-centric has existed at least since Lazarsfeld et al. (1948) but the scholarly debate on this continues: some suggest that politics is all about groups (Achen and Bartels 2016; Green et al. 2002), whereas others maintain the opposite (Abramowitch and Saunders 2006; Franklin et al. 1992). This dissertation suggests that the real question is not *whether* voting is group-centric but *when* it is. As Kinder and Kam (2009) argue, group-centrism is always context-dependent. Yet, in Achen and Bartels' (2016: 230) words, we know too little about how "politically relevant cleavages" are shaped in the "macro-social world of politics". Like recent work on the policy responsiveness of class voting, this dissertation suggests that group politics is driven first and foremost by party electoral strategy (Elff 2009; Evans and De Graaf 2013; Evans and Tilley 2017). It also suggest, however, that the social basis of electoral choice is not only policy responsive (see also Heath 2015). Voters respond to policy images, but they also respond to the group images that vote-seeking parties choose to present.

7.3. Directions for future research

I have substantiated the group theory of party electoral strategy in various ways but many questions remain. This section elaborates on three major avenues for future research: (i) expanding the empirical scope of this dissertation, (ii) exploring the group categories targeted, (iii) and studying the interplay of electoral appeals.

The first and most immediate avenue is to expand the scope of this analysis. I focused on the British case because of its central role in the literature on class and catch-all politics, and because party competition here is relatively simple. However, the argument should apply beyond Britain, since group thinking is inherent to voting in general (see Chapter 3 and Article A). So far, the evidence from Denmark in Chapter 6 indicates that the argument does travel, but data on more countries is needed to confirm this. As further work expands the empirical scope of this dissertation, it may also want to consider alternative sources on electoral appeals. Chapter 2 posits that parties can use group-based appeals to associate or dissociate themselves or rival parties with/from given groups. Yet, the content analysis found very few examples where a party distances itself from a group or talks about another party. Following a recent study that shows how party electoral strategies vary across communication channels (Tresch et al. 2017), I suspect that this has to do with

using election manifestos as a source. The group-based appeals of vote-seeking parties may indeed look different if we consider direct confrontations in TV debates or political speeches given in closed circles.[32]

The second avenue for future research concerns the group categories that parties target. The empirical analysis has mainly focused on social class since this has been "the basis of British party politics" (Pulzer 1967: 98; see also Evans and Tilley 2017; Green 2007). Yet, elsewhere other groups were more important in structuring politics (Brooks et al. 2006; Lijphart 1979). How the group theory of party electoral strategy fares in contexts where groups based on race, religion or place are most salient is an issue that deserves attention. For example, do group-based religious appeals also shape the religious basis of electoral choice in the United States or other countries where the religious cleavage prevails? I expect they do as differences between religious groups likely also respond to parties' policy and group images, but this requires empirical investigation.

More important perhaps is the question about the nature of the "new" groups increasingly targeted. As shown here, and more detailed in Article A, there has been a shift of group emphasis in Britain (and Denmark) away from traditional group categories like workers and women towards new, more issue-specific categories like parents or patients. I took this to support the group theory of party electoral strategy since it is consistent with the prevalent electoral incentives. However, this change also poses some issues that need to be addressed. The long-standing politicization of groups based on class, race or religion has infused these categories with political meaning. People know which parties represent these groups (Achen and Bartels 2016; Campbell et al. 1960; Dalton 2014; see Article C for more on this). The same cannot be said of groups like parents, patients or families, however. Are group-based appeals targeting the "new" categories as effective as those targeting well-known social categories like workers? One recent study shows that parties can benefit substantially from targeting parents (Klar 2013), but research so far is sparse. Also, the finding in Chapter 4 that patient emphasis was more strongly related to issue emphasis than worker emphasis was raises the question if the new categories that parties increasingly target are generally more closely tied to policy positions or issue emphasis. On the face, that would seem to undermine, or at least change, the distinctiveness of group-based appeals in the party electoral repertoire. Yet, more detailed analyses are needed before we can draw any conclusions.

The third and final avenue for future research concerns the interplay of party electoral appeals – not in terms of their use but in terms of their effects.

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[32] Hillygus and Shields' (2008) idea about micro-targeting seems relevant here.

The empirical analysis has sought to establish that group-based appeals matter in their own right. I showed how group-based appeals help explain significant electoral outcomes independent of policy-based appeals. Yet, the most rewarding strategy may actually be to combine the electoral appeals, and the evidence also suggests that parties do. Indeed, around two-thirds of the group-based appeals recorded in the content analysis contained some policy information in addition to the group reference. Why would parties want to combine policy-based and group-based appeals? What do they stand to gain?

One possibility is that parties use them to reinforce one another in an effort to get one key message across. Doing so may help parties send a signal powerful enough to overcome the fact that people rarely notice and respond to policy shifts (Adams et al. 2011). In the British case, this was exactly what happened: Labour adopted more centrist policy positions and downplayed its working class ties in tandem as part of an overall catch-all strategy. This in turn allowed Labour to increase support outside its declining base but also undermined the class basis of electoral choice in the process. Although I mainly discussed the independent effects of policy-based and group-based appeals, there is also evidence that the two can amplify one another. For example, Article B indicates that Labour's centrist left-right policy position was most successful in raising support outside its base when the party also downplayed its symbolic ties to the working-class trade unionists.[33] On the other hand, the survey-experimental evidence in Chapter 6 did not reveal any additional vote gain of electoral appeals containing both policy and group cues compared to appeals that only had the group cue. This an issue that is clearly worth exploring in coming work.

Another reason to combine the electoral appeals is that they may allow parties to diversify the voter appeal. As Dickson and Scheve (2006) predict, a voter should be more willing to accept a party moving away from his policy preference if that party is still seen as representing the group to which he belongs. Thus, letting policy-based appeals and group-based appeals point in different directions could allow parties to target a broader electorate in a way more subtly than moving to a vague centrist position or offering policies that obviously clash (Somer-Topcu 2015). However, the diverse voter appeal could also be a way of targeting entirely different segments of the electorate: for example, it could be one way that the mainstream parties in advanced industrial democracies

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[33] As is always the case with interaction terms, this conditional relationship is symmetrical, meaning that the effect of Labour's group-based class appeals can also be said to depend on its left-right policy position.

have attempted to "chase" the unaligned, policy-responsive voters (Rohrschneider 2002: 376) without alienating their remaining, group-centric core (Karreth et al. 2012; Mair et al. 2004).

7.4. Final remarks

Even the most casual observer of politics will know that parties appeal to groups. In election manifestos, parliamentary debates, media interviews or political speeches, we often hear party elites saying which groups they represent. The main contribution of this dissertation is to offer a theory that makes sense of the use and consequences of such group-based appeals. Many studies have argued that elites target groups (e.g., Carnes and Sadin 2015; Dickson and Scheve 2006; Jackson 2011; Kinder and Kam 2009; Klar 2013; Mendelberg 2001), but this work has not been picked up by the literature on party electoral strategy since it is unclear how it relates to the dominant policy positioning perspective. In contrast, I advance and substantiate a group theory of party electoral strategy that directly confronts the dominant policy account. This raises the general question of whether this theory constitutes a second model of party strategy and mass-elite linkage. In time, I believe that it could, but the empirical evidence is presently too sparse to tell. While major datasets on party positions and issue emphasis allow scholars to explore the role of policy-based appeals in democratic politics, there is virtually no data available on group-based appeals or other *non-policy* strategies. Research on policy-based appeals is set to continue, but we need to widen our empirical and theoretical perspectives if we want to understand how parties appeal for votes. This dissertation suggests one way forward.

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Appendix:
Coding instructions

Coding Group-Based Appeals in British Election Manifestos 1964-2015

1. Introduction
This document serves four purposes. The first is to provide human coders with the instructions needed to conduct this content analysis in a reliable manner. The second is to provide subsequent readers with sufficient information about the data-generating process to understand and evaluate results and conclusions. The third is to enable its replication using the same text. And the fourth is to enable researchers to extend the analysis to cover other time periods, more countries, or different channels of political communication.

2. Group-based appeals
On an abstract level, group-based appeal consist of the five components shown in Table A1. This is also the features on which they vary empirically.

Table A1. Components of group-based appeals

Component	Description
Location	Where, when and how is the appeal made?
Sponsor	Who makes the appeal?
Subject	Which party is implicated?
Object	Which group is implicated?
Relation	How is the subject claimed to relate to the object?

First, a group-based appeals has a **location**. It is always made in a specific *context*: at a certain place, at a certain time, and through a certain medium. Second, some party always *makes* the appeal. There is always a **sponsor**. An appeal cannot be understood without knowing who is behind it. Third, all group-based appeals have a **subject**: some *party* is being claimed to be tied to some voters. Often, the sponsor and subject will be one and the same party but other times they will not. Parties can claim that they *themselves* represent a group, or they can make claims about *other* parties' ties to voters. Both are possible and both occur. Fourth, group-based appeals have an **object**, that is, some *voters* who are claimed to be related to the subject. Examples include groups such as *women*, *immigrants*, *workers*, and *young people*. Finally, the

group-based appeals contain some **relation** between the subject and the object (i.e., between party and voter group), suggesting whether the two "go together" or not. Are they close or distant? Associated or dissociated? Together, subject, object and relation form the core of group-based appeals (though all five components are necessary for an appeal to exist).

In short group-based appeals are statements about ties between parties and groups. Table A2 illustrates how subject, object and relation might vary across group-based appeals. For illustrative purposes the sponsor and location are kept constant in the table. But we are of course equally interested in change over time and differences between sponsoring parties. All in all, this is the type of variation the content analysis aims to record.

Table A2. Variations in group-based appeals for a given party in a given location

In a given context, party A might...			
	associate...	itself...	with group X
	associate...	itself...	with group Y
	associate...	itself...	from group X
	associate...	itself...	from group Y
	dissociate...	party B...	with group X
	dissociate...	party B...	with group Y
	dissociate...	party B...	from group X
	dissociate...	party B...	from group Y
	associate...		
	associate...		
	dissociate...		
	dissociate...		

4. Identifying group-based appeals

This content analysis is *selective*. In other words, coding is not about best describing party programs but about recording the precise aspects of parties' electoral appeals that this study finds relevant. Further, though group-based appeals do strike a chord with actual party rhetoric, when coding they should be seen as an analytical tool. They are not perfect descriptions of the exact way parties related themselves (or others) to groups. The order of listed components will vary. Sometimes the party subject appears first and sometimes the group object comes first. Other times certain components will not figure explicitly but is nonetheless implied and therefore coded. Coders must use their interpretive abilities to match text to the concept. This our main reason for coding manually instead of automated. The remainder of this document shows

how to apply this framework to the text corpus starting in this section by clarifying how group-based appeals are recognized.

First of all, as noted above, an appeal has five constituent parts each of which are necessary for something to count as an appeal. This does not imply, however, that all parts should appear in the words, sentences or paragraphs being read. In this sense, identifying group-based appeals goes beyond the text. Parties rarely say "Today, May 9th 2015, in the Labour manifesto (*location*), we, the Labour Party (*sponsor*), claim that we (*subject*) will protect the lives (*relation*) of working people (*object*)". For one thing, the location is almost never a part of the textual content. Instead, it is identified from the context, i.e., by noting time, place and source of the manifesto concerned. Likewise, the sponsor does not necessarily figure in the content either. This is particularly true for sources like manifestos where the sponsor is omnipresent

In practical terms, this means that location and sponsor are constant and pre-coded for each manifesto. Coders do not have to consider these while coding. However, the subject, the object and their relation must always be determined from the textual content and coded uniquely for each group-based appeal. Thus, the unitizing of group-based appeals is about identifying these three elements. Consider the following model example: [34]

Table A3. Example of a group-based appeal

We seek to bring about a fundamental change in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families.

No location and no sponsor is present in the text yet knowing that the text is part of Labour's 1979 election manifesto provides all the contextual information necessary to code this and all other appeals in the same manifesto (as mentioned, these are pre-coded). From the text itself we further identify a subject "we", an object "working people", and the relation between them (boiling down to "favour"). Thus, seen through our framework, in *1979*, *Labour* argues that *it* is *associated* with *working people*. We have here an appeal. Not all appeals are as obvious or abridged as this one. Some span several sentences and others are more indirect than the one presented here (more on this below). Even so, the trinity of subject-object-relation must be identifiable.

In terms of workflow the easiest and best way to go about identifying group-based appeals is to search the text for objects (more on the object later). Once an object is found, determine if a subject is also present and how the two

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[34] All examples in these instructions draw on the 1979 Labour and Conservative manifestos.

are related to each other. Only then should the variables be coded and entered in the database.

How group-based appeals look
Group-based appeals manifest themselves in different shapes and sizes. As shown in Table A2 they vary on a number of features. Nonetheless, a few of these affect the textual appearance more than the others and so coders need to be familiar with these to better recognize claims.

First, relating to the *subject*, appeals can be about the sponsoring party itself, or they can be about another party. We have already seen an example of the sponsoring party also being the subject (Table A3). Most often this manifests itself in the words "I", "we", "our" or the party name. Below, Table A4 provides an example of the other instance, i.e., when sponsor and subject differ.

Table A4. Example a group-based appeal where the rival party is the subject.

However, like others, pensioners have suffered from the high taxes and catastrophic inflation of Labour's year.

Knowing that this comes from the 1979 Conservative manifesto, we see the Conservative party saying that Labour has misrepresented (or is dissociated from) pensioners. "Labour" is the subject, "pensioners" the object, and "suffered" the relation. Note also that the appeal in Table A4 is about Labour's record. But more broadly, appeals may be about the past, the present or the future. Whether they suggest what *was*, what *is*, or what *comes* is irrelevant for our purposes. All count and should be coded.

Though subject, object and relation are all identified at the appeal or textual level (as opposed to the source or context level) we have different requirements as to how explicit they should be in the text. Objects must always be manifestly present. That is, a specific word or phrase conveying the group object is a prerequisite to identifying a group-based appeal. Indeed, as noted above the object is what coders should look for when reading. This special emphasis on the object is also reflected when coding where we write down and record the exact wording.

The subject represents a special case as it need not be explicitly present. It will often appear as "we", "our", or the like. But parties sometimes leave out the subject. For instance, a subtitle simply reading "Women" is clearly relevant to this analysis. It is an effort by the sponsoring party to link itself to this group by devoting attention to it. Though no single word explicate the subject it is obvious that the sponsoring party is actually saying something about itself and

the object. Not coding it would seem to question validity. Coding of these cases can be said to rest on the assumption that people reading the statement would interpret it *as if* a subject were present.

Implicit subject presence occurs especially where the sponsoring party relates *itself* to a group. Table A5 gives an example of a constituency claim in which the party subject is implicitly present.

Table A5. Example of an implicitly present subject

If full employment is to be achieved, longer holidays, time off for study, earlier voluntary retirement, and a progressive move to a 35-hour working week, must play an increasing role during the 1980s. But these changes in the pattern of employment are not only necessary to keep jobs, but also to improve the quality of living for working people, to give them more leisure and the means to enjoy it to which their work and modern technology entitles them.

Though there is no "we" or "Labour" in the statement above, readers are assumed to infer that Labour is indeed claiming that it wishes to "improve the quality of living" (relation) for "working people" (object) by saying what "must" happen. Appeals where the subject figures only implicitly often contain words like "must" (as above) or "should". Such words can generally be said to indicate something about what the sponsoring party prefers or thinks is just *for* the object. Note that it is recorded whether subjects are implicitly or explicitly present.

A final thing to note when identifying appeals pertains to the *relation* between subject and object. Firstly, coding the relation is more a matter of human judgement than of pinpointing predetermined words. Here more than anywhere else, we rely on human skill as language processors (Shapiro 1997). However, as I return to, the coding decision must always be justifiable with reference to specific text. Consequently, is not mere intuition but interpretation of manifest text that lies behind the coding of the relation.

Secondly, the relation between subject and object can be more or less direct and this affects how group-based appeals appear textually quite a bit. Labour claiming to "take great care to protect" workers is a fairly direct relation. But more often, particularly in manifestos, group-based appeals are more indirect. They relate first, the subject to a policy and relate second, the policy to an object. Or conversely, the object is first related to a policy, and the policy then related to the subject. In both cases, the relation between subject and object is policy-embedded. Table A6 provides an example of each of these expressions.

Table A6. Examples of group-based appeals with policy information

a) We shall amend laws such as the Employment Protection Act where they damage smaller businesses.

b) Income tax starts at such a low level that many poor people are being taxed to pay for their own benefits. All too often they are little or no better off at work than they are on social security. This was one of our principal reasons for proposing a tax credit scheme.

In *a)*, the subject, "we", means to amend a policy (*subject-policy* relation) that is currently damaging an object, "smaller businesses" (*policy-object* relation). In *b)*, the order is reversed. The current policy is presented as hurting the object, "poor people" (*object-policy* relation), which is claimed to be the reason behind "our", the subject's, policy proposal (*policy-subject* relation). Though the two appeals appear somewhat different, a subject, object, and relation is identifiable in both and should be coded. It is recorded whether the appeal is only based on a group cue or if it also includes policy information.

What is not a group-based appeal?

To further clarify what group-based appeals are and what they look like, it is helpful to discuss what they are not. First of all, group-based appeals are different from policy positions. Parties' claims to embody, represent or symbolize certain group are clearly something *other* than their policy-based appeals appeals. However, electoral appeals that mix group cue and policy information are perhaps best thought of as something *more* than a position rather than something distinct. What makes a statement a group-based appeal rather than a policy-based appeal is that it makes explicit which group of voters are targeted.

Table A7 gives two examples of statements falling short of being a group-based appeals, since they both lack the group object.

Table A7 Examples of what does not qualify as a group-based appeal

a) We would give high priority to working for a return to full employment. A good job is a basic human right.

b) This Government's price controls have done nothing to prevent inflation, as is proved by the doubling of prices since they came to power. All the controls have achieved is a loss of jobs and a reduction in consumer choice.

Both examples arguably appeal particularly to *the unemployed* and/or *consumers* (both objects) but in neither statement is this made explicit. It is not for coders to infer who a statement might appeal to or who would be affected its implementation. This analysis records only who parties actually refer to.

There must be an explicit reference that describes or labels some group.[35] We apply this coding rule very strictly. Even though a reader would probably not make much difference between an appeal to "consumer choice" (as in example *b*) and one to "consumers" coders reject the former and accept the latter as an object. This is done for the sake of conceptual clarity and to increase reliability.

The same logic applies when parties claim commitment to certain *values* (e.g. "Our purpose is to overcome the evils of inequality, poverty, [and] racial bigotry [...]"), or when parties argue that their policies benefit (or that the opponent's policies damage) the *economy*. Such communication is certainly relevant for the study of electoral competition and might also be relevant to specific voters but it is not a group-based appeal and should not be coded.

Pilot coding has shown that generally statements presenting a subject but no object, like those in Table A7, are ones to be wary of. Consequently, focusing the reading of election manifestos on first finding group objects should help overcome this caveat and serve to increase reliably.

Distinguishing group-based appeals
Not always are group-based appeals neatly separated from each other as they appear in manifestos or elsewhere. For this study the rule guiding when and where an appeal begins and ends centers around the subject, the object and the relation. While all three are necessary parts of an appeal, *there can be only one of each per appeal*. Thus, a change in either always marks the start of a new appeal. A new group-based appeal might, for instance, start if the same object is repeated. Salience or emphasis is a vital part of how parties compete for votes. There is a difference between – and deliberate strategy behind – mentioning "children" one time or three times.

A new appeal might also begin if the object changes to something qualitatively different. It is in fact fairly common that the same subject is related to multiple objects. Table A8 gives an example of this.

Table A8. Example of multiple objects

The welfare of the old, the sick, the handicapped and the deprived has also suffered under Labour.

Here, the Conservatives dissociate not themselves, but Labour from no less than four objects in the same sentence. As only one object should be coded per appeal this is in fact four appeals. Location, claimant, subject and relation remain stable across the four appeals but the group object varies.

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[35] The two statements could perhaps instead be taken as indicating a policy position. Again, this is not what the present study records.

Coders must take special care in distinguishing group-based appeals where coupled objects are used. Phrases like "young criminals", "working families", "local business" are tricky to handle. Are "young criminals" a reference to young or to criminals? To handle these reliably we apply a rule. We separate the two and code an appeal for each. Table A9 below presents an example where the object is coupled.

Table A9. Example of multiple group objects

Many families who live on council estates and in new towns would like to buy their own homes but either cannot afford to or are prevented by the Labour government.

Here, the Conservatives are claiming that Labour is dissociated from "many families who live on council estates and in new towns". We treat this as a reference to three social groups: *families, council tenants*, and *new town tenants*. Thus, three appeals are coded. Having providing instructions on how to identify and separate group-based appeals, we now move on to their content.

5. Coding the content of group-based appeals

Once a group-based appeal has been identified, its content needs to be coded. As mentioned, this is done immediately following identification. Accordingly, in practice the two analytically distinct steps (i.e., unitizing and coding) melt together. To be perfectly clear about the work process the coding of each individual appeal is completed before moving on to the next.[36]

In this section, the variables related to each group-based appeals are presented, as are their values. Table A10 presents the variables grouped under the respective components of group-based appeals (except administrative variables). In what follows, we go through each of the variables to be coded starting with the administrative ones.

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[36] To facilitate easy and reliable data entry, we have constructed a web-based template displaying key variables (subject, object, relation) and their values in much the same way questions and response categories in a web-based survey would be presented to respondents. Thus, coders always have the relevant coding instructions present on screen; can enter only valid codes; and are reminded to enter a code if forgotten. Further, a number of constants (i.e. administrative, location and sponsor variables) are automatically pre-entered for each new manifesto leaving the coder free to focus solely on the subject, object and relation variables. The number of variables that a coder needs to keep track of is reduced dramatically. Finally, as data is easily exportable following entry, the task of entering handwritten coding sheets into a data file is cut away.

Table 10. Variables according to the components of group-based appeals.

Location	Sponsor	Subject	Object	Relation
Country	Sponsor party	Subject party	Object identity	Relation type
Source type		Subject presence	Object type	Relation direction
Source name				
Year				
Month				

Administration

Variable **id**

"Identification number of unit"

      Number

Note: A running count of group-based appeals with each given a unique number. This is coded automatically.

Variable **coderid**

"Identification number of the coder"

    1   Researcher

    2   External coder

    3   Reliability coding

Note: Data has been coded by the researcher and two external coders (PhD students in political science). A reliability sample will be coded to run formal inter-coder-reliability tests. This variable is pre-coded.

Variable **vers**

"Version of the coding instructions used when coding"

    1   Version 1

    2   Version 2

Note: Version 1 was used July-September 2015. Version 2 (present) was used from October 2015 and onwards. There are only minor revisions between the two versions. Some more examples are now provided and a few clarifications have been made. This variable is pre-coded.

Location

Variable **country**

"Country in which the appeal figures"

    1   United Kingdom

Note: Only British political parties are coded at present. This variable is pre-coded.

Variable **sourtype**

"Type of source in which the appeal figures"

1   Election manifesto
Note: Only election manifestos are coded at present. This variable is pre-coded.

Variable **sourname**
"Name of the source in which the appeal figures"
1   Conservative Party manifesto
2   Labour Party manifesto
Note: This variable is pre-coded for each manifesto.

Variable **year**
"Year the appeal was made"
1970 through 2015
Note: This variable is pre-coded for each manifesto.

Variable **month**
"Month the appeal was made"
1 through 12
Note: This variable is pre-coded for each manifesto.

Sponsor party
Variable **sponsparty**
"Name of the sponsoring party"
1   Conservative Party
2   Labour Party
Note: Only the two major parties of the covered time period are included. This variable is pre-coded for each manifesto.

Subject
Variable **subparty**
"Party or party affiliation of subject"
1   Conservative Party
2   Labour Party
3   Liberal Democrats (after 1988)
4   Liberal Party (before 1988)
5   Other
Note: The once prominent Liberal Party (coded separately) existed until 1988 where it merged with the Social Democratic Party (coded under "other") to become Liberal Democrats (coded separately). Subjects other than Conservatives or Labour are very rare.

We code references to "the Opposition", "the Government" or the like as references to one of the two major parties – taking into account their incumbency status. Thus, if Labour claims the "the Government" associated with "the British people" in their 1979 election manifesto we code this as a reference to themselves. If the Conservatives used the exact same wording in 1979 we code this as reference to Labour. In both instances, we would use the category **subparty**, *Labour Party.*

Variable **subpres**
"Presence of subject in the appeal"
      1   Explicit
      2   Implicit
Note: Explicit subject presence refers to the case when "we (they)", "I (he/she)", "our (their)", or a party label is present in the text. Further a specific time period can denote a subject as well. For instance, "since the last election ordinary people have suffered" or "between 1974 and 1979 Britain has been hurt" clearly point out who is to blame.
Implicit subject presence describes the case when no word(s) refer to the subject but it is implied nonetheless. When parties say that some action or policy "need", "must", or "should" be undertaken, or is "necessary", "right", or "best" they are often implicitly present as subjects even though the subject word is not manifest.
Implicit subject presence inevitably puts more emphasis on coders' interpretation. Thus, one reason to code this variable is to ensure that we can test whether this kind of group-based appeal is recorded reliably.

Variable **objid**
"Identity or name of group object"
      Text
Note: Write name exactly as it figures. Include the entire description of the object. If the text says "Many families who live on council estates and in new towns would like to buy their own homes but either cannot afford to or are prevented by the Labour government" (example from table 9) the full "Many families who live on council estates and in new towns" denotes the object identity and should be recorded
Further, in the case of a coupled object that needs to be separated into multiple appeals, preserve the full text in each appeal but put brackets around the part that does not make up that observation. In our example write "Many families (who live on council estates and in new towns)" when coding the family appeal, and "(Many families) who live on council estates (and in new towns)" when coding the council tenant appeal, and "(Many families who live

on council estates and in) new towns" when coding the one about new town tenants.

Lastly, if coders need to add information to the object to aid subsequent reading insert a bracket after the object and start with "i.e.". For instance, for an object simply reading "those who are" coders should add information to aid interpretation. It could look like this: "those who are (i.e. unemployed)".

Variable **objdim**
"Economic or non-economic group"

1   Economic class (i.e., labels referring to economic resources)
E.g. workers, working people, employees, wage-earners, firms, small businesses, managers, employers, self-employed, entrepreneurs, businessmen, shareholders, tenants, first-time buyers, landlords, mortgage owners, those who are homeless, people with lower incomes, those who have the least, our poorest, the rich, the privileged few, those who can afford to pay, small investors, unemployed, those who have lost their job, those in poverty, the "have nots", those on benefits, those in need, the middle class, students, pensioners, those retired, etc.

2   Other categories
Ethnicity: e.g., ethnic minorities, ethnic communities, black Britons, white, coloured people, etc.
Place: e.g., country areas, rural areas, communities in the rural economy, regions, cities, villages, local communities, people in the North, the wider South East, people living in the countryside, (families) living in our inner-cities [note: coupled object], urban areas, London, England, Scotland, Wales, the people of Northern Ireland, the countryside, local (business) [note: coupled object], every corner of the United Kingdom..
Nationality: e.g., immigrants, asylum seekers, foreign people, health tourists, visitors, those who are smuggled here, those who enter this country to join their husband or wife, those settled, those who come here, etc.
Religion: e.g., Muslims, all people of faith, religious communities, etc.
Gender: e.g., women, housewives, widows, mothers, fathers, men, etc.
Health: e.g., the sick, patients, disabled people, the blind, people with mental illness, everyone needing to use the NHS, etc.
Age: e.g., the young, young people, youngsters, the elderly, old people, over-80s, 17-to 18-year-olds, etc. We distinguish, somewhat

arbitrarily, children from young people by treating any age reference including 14 or younger as children and any reference including 15 or older as young people

Interest groups: e.g., trade unions, environmental groups, citizen rights groups, feminist movements, relief organizations, etc.

Professional groups: e.g., nurses, teachers, doctors, consultants, lawyers, bankers, scientists, miners, servicemen, officers, farmers, fishermen, etc.

Other examples: e.g., consumers, parents, families, taxpayers, ratepayers, pupils, criminals, offenders, addicts, victims, polluters, commuters, care-takers, the law-abiding, homosexuals, etc. We also code references like the few, the many, vulnerable groups, the elite, the majority, the minority, the public, the nation.

Relation
Variable **reltype**
"Type of relation between party subject and group object"

| 1 | Only group cue |
| 2 | Policy information |

Note: An indirect relation between subject and object goes through some sort of policy (cf. table 6). A direct relation does not. For instance, claims of Labour not offering a "new deal" to farmers or one of "cutting taxes" for everyone are indirect. The policy element can be quite abstract or very concrete but if present the relation is indirect. In contrast, direct claims to "take care of", "champion", "hear" or "stand up for" some object do not draw on any policy to frame the relation. In some cases parties claim simply to make "policy" for some object without specifying anything at all about that policy. This is treated as a direct claim as "policy" here is purely symbolic. Claims in subtitles are almost always direct, e.g. "Let the nation decide", "Women's interests", or simply "Minorities".

Variable **reldirec**
"Direction of relation between party subject and group object"

-1	Dissociation/negative
0	Both directions
1	Association/positive
99	Indiscernible

Note: Coders must use their judgement here. It is futile to attempt an exhaustive list of words. Nonetheless, the coding decision must always be justifiable with reference to a manifestly present word or phrase. With the exception of subtitles, direct group-based appeals most often include clearly value-laden

words, e.g., "favor", "protect", "privilege" on the positive side, "threaten", "attack", "ignore" on the negative. For indirect appeals, which also contain policy information, it differs more. At times, policies are said to "damage", "hurt", "benefit", or "target" some object leaving no doubt about the direction of the relation.

Other times the wording is more ambiguous: A policy "for" an object can be either positive or negative for that object. In such cases coders consider the nature of the policy itself. A party proposing a tax "for" someone is obviously dissociating itself from the object. But a party proposing a subsidy "for" someone is associated with this object. However, sometimes neither specific words about the relation nor the nature of the policy (or their combination) will carry a clear connotation of positive/negative, association/dissociation, attachment/detachment. This is our main reason for including the category **reldirec,** *indiscernible.*

On rare occasions, a party subject and a group object is both associated and dissociated. Typical examples of this is when a party states that a group has certain "rights" and certain "responsibilities", or that a group is fairly being "helped" but that the help should be "limited". We code this as **reldirec***, both directions. Thus, the difference between indiscernible and both directions is that in the latter different words point in different directions whereas in the former no words point in any (clear) direction.*

6. Guidelines and overview

1. All appeal elements are necessary for something to count as a group-based appeal.
2. While reading, search for group objects and work from there.
3. There can be only one subject, object and relation in one appeal. A change in either subject or object marks a new group-based appeal.
4. Finish coding of each appeal before moving on.
5. If in doubt about a coding-decision follow this procedure:
   5.1. Confront the coding instructions (particularly the examples).
   5.2. If doubt remains and it concerns whether something qualifies as a group-based appeal (e.g., if a group object is even present), refrain from coding it at all.
   5.3. Conversely, if doubt remains and it concerns which code to use (e.g. if a group object should be coded as economic or non-economic group), pick the one that seem *most* appropriate. If none seem most appropriate, refrain from coding the appeal.

An overview

Table A11. Overview of variables, descriptions, values and labels

Variable	Description	Value and label
id	Identification number of unit	Number
coderid	Identification number of the coder	1 Researcher 2 External coder 3 Reliability coding
vers	Version of the coding instructions used when coding	1 Version 1 2 Version 2
country	Country in which the appeal figures	1 United Kingdom
sourname	Name of source in which the appeal figures	1 Conservative Party manifesto 2 Labour Party manifesto
year	Year the appeal was made	1964 through 2015
month	Month the appeal was made	1 through 12
sponsparty	Name of the sponsoring party	1 Conservative Party 2 Labour Party
subparty	Party or party affiliation of subject actor	1 Conservative Party 2 Labour Party 3 Liberal Democrats 4 Liberal Party 5 Other
subpres	Presence of subject in the appeal	1 Explicit 2 Implicit
objid	Identity or name of group object	Text
reltype	Type of relation between party subject and group object	1 Only group cue 2 Group cue and policy information
reldirec	Direction or value of relation between party subject and group object	-1 Dissociation/ negative 0 Both directions 1 Association/ positive 99 Indiscernible

English summary

A mainstay of representative democracies is that political parties appeal for votes in competition over office. In this dissertation, I advance a new theory of party electoral strategy, which takes its point of departure in the longstanding idea that voters are group-oriented. I argue that since voters evaluate parties based on which groups they are thought to represent, vote-seeking parties use group-based appeals to change or sustain their group images so that the public sees what they want. This contrasts with the dominant perspective in the literature, which builds on the idea that voters are policy-motivated, and argues that parties use policy-based appeals to adjust policy images in ways that fit what the electorate wants.

I use unique data from a content analysis of British election manifestos from 1964 to 2015 to show that group-based appeals are increasingly used, that they are used in accordance with electoral incentives, and that they are not proxies for other party strategic variables like policy positions and issue emphasis. I also show that group-based appeals can help parties gain votes, and that they can shape the social basis of electoral choice. In both cases they do so independently of the policy-based appeals that previous work has focused on. We seem to be dealing with a distinct way that parties appeal to voters. One that matters to party electoral success and individual vote choice on its own.

The findings have major implications for our understanding of democratic politics and raises a number of questions that future research should address. Regardless of the answers to these questions, however, this dissertation shows that group-based appeals represent one way that political parties appeal for votes that is too substantial to ignore. The dissertation consists of this summary report and three self-contained articles.

Dansk resumé

Et hovedtræk ved det repræsentative demokrati er, at politiske partier appellerer til vælgere for at vinde magten. Denne afhandling udvikler en ny teori om partiernes vælgerstrategier, som bygger på en veletableret idé om, at vælgere er gruppeorienterede. Teorien siger, at eftersom vælgere evaluerer politiske partier på bagrund af, hvilke grupper de antages at repræsentere, så bruger partierne gruppeappeller til at ændre eller fastholde netop det gruppeimage, de gerne vil fremvise for offentligheden. Denne teori står i kontrast til det dominerende perspektiv i litteraturen, der antager, at vælgere er policymotiverede, og at partier derfor bruger policyappeller i forsøget på at fremvise et policyimage, som matcher vælgernes efterspørgsel.

På baggrund af enestående data fra en ny indholdsanalyse af britiske partiers valgprogrammer mellem 1964 og 2015 viser jeg, at brugen af gruppeappeller er tiltagende, at de bruges i overensstemmelse med vælgermarkedets incitamenter, og at gruppeappellerne ikke blot er substitutter for andre velkendte partistrategiske variable såsom policypositioner og emneopmærksomhed. Derudover viser jeg, at de politiske partier kan bruge gruppeappeller til at øge deres stemmeandele, og at appellerne kan påvirke, om folk stemmer på baggrund af socialt gruppetilhør eller ej. I begge tilfælde virker gruppeappellerne ud over partiernes policyappeller. Selvom litteraturen ikke har øje for det, synes gruppeappellerne således at udgøre en helt central vælgerstrategi hos partierne – en strategi som i sig selv kan løfte stemmeandelen og påvirke vælgeradfærd.

Disse fund har vigtige implikationer for vores forståelse af demokratisk politik og rejser en række nøglespørgsmål, som kommende forskning bør tage op. Men uanset svarene på disse spørgsmål, så er hovedpointen i denne afhandling, at gruppeappeller er en så central del af de politiske partiers vælgerstrategi, at vi dårligt kan ignorere dem. Den samlede afhandling består af sammenfatningen her og tre selvstændige forskningsartikler.